

Abstract

This study applies socio-cultural theories to explore how differences in essay writing experience and essay texts are constituted for a group of students identified as dyslexic. It is a qualitative study with eleven student writers, seven of whom are formally identified as dyslexic, from the schools of archaeology, history and philosophy in a pre-1992 UK university. Semi-structured interviews before, during and after writing a coursework essay revealed well-documented dyslexia-related difficulties, but also strong differences in how writing was experienced. The multiple and fluid dimensions that construct these differences suggest the importance of position within the context, previous and developing writing and learning experience and meta-cognitive, meta-affective and meta-linguistic awareness. Close analysis of how essays evolved and of samples of 'difficult' texts reveal the multiple ways that communication can be compromised. This suggests that much more nuanced descriptions are needed of essay writing difficulties in this group. Findings from the interview data and essay texts further suggest tensions between specialist and inclusive approaches to writing pedagogy for students identified as dyslexic.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Acknowledgements	2
List of Figures	8
List of Tables	9
Glossary of Abbreviations	10
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	11
Background, context and overview of the thesis	11
1.1 Research question and background.....	11
1.2 The context of the study	13
(i) The dyslexia context	13
(ii) The essay writing context	20
(iii) Bringing together the two areas of study	23
1.3 Terminology used.....	25
1.4 Plan of the thesis	26
Chapter 2: Literature Review	28
Dyslexia, essay writing and academic literacies: meeting points and departures	28
2.1 Introduction	28
2.2 Approaches to reviewing the literature	29
Literature Review: Part 1	33
The place of dyslexia in the essay writing experience	33
2.1.1 Descriptions of difficulty	33
2.1.2 Definitions and causal framework	34
2.1.3 Research into the essay writing of students identified as dyslexic.....	35
2.1.4 Relating essay writing to theories of dyslexia	43
(i) The focus on reading.....	43
(ii) Dyslexia and adults	46
(iii) The relevance of causal theories	47
(iv) Sub-types and co-occurring SpLDs	55
2.1.5 Dyslexia in context	59
(i) The role of affective factors.....	60
(ii) A constructionist approach	61
(iii) Possible discourses of dyslexia in HE.....	63
2.1.6 Conclusion to Part 1.....	68
Literature Review: Part 2.....	70
Essay writing as social practice: The picture beyond dyslexia	70
2.2.1 An academic literacies approach to essay writing: theoretical basis	70
2.2.2 Implications for writers and their essay texts	76

(i) Knowledge-making practices	77
(ii) Identity as a student essay writer	80
(iii) Social relations	81
2.2.3 Analysing essay texts.....	83
(i) Coherence	86
(ii) Argument	89
2.2.4 Possible contribution of other perspectives on writing	91
(i) A cognitive approach.....	92
(i) An expressivist approach	94
(ii) A socioliterate approach.....	94
2.2.5 Conclusion to Part 2.....	97
Literature Review: Conclusion	98
Establishing a position.....	98
2.3 Meeting points	98
2.4 Departures	99
(i) Writing problems as contextually-driven or within- person.....	99
(ii) Cognitive connections between writing processes and dyslexia: do they imply within-person deficit?.....	101
(iii) The focus on disadvantaged or marginalised groups	103
(iv) Differences in conceptions of 'errors'	104
(v) Differences in research methodology	106
2.5 An emerging position	107
Chapter 3: Methodology	110
Introduction.....	110
Methodology: Part 1	111
Theoretical approach to methods and analysis	111
3.1.1 From starting points to research paradigms	111
(i) Achieving a position	111
(ii) Possible paradigms.....	113
(iii) Discussion	115
3.1.2 From research paradigms to methods	116
(i) Semi-structured interviews	117
(ii) Essay texts	119
3.1.3 Approaches to analysis.....	120
(i) The relationship between data and literature.....	122
(ii) Sampling strategy.....	122
(iii) Basis for coding	123
(iv) Building theory	124
3.1.4 Data management.....	124
3.3.5 Issues of credibility.....	125
3.1.6 Ethical considerations	126
(i) Voluntary informed consent	126
(ii) Deception	127
(iii) Right to withdraw.....	128
(iv) Incentives	128

(v) Detriment arising from participation in the research	128
(vi) Privacy	128
(vii) Disclosure	129
3.1.7 Conclusion to part 1.....	130
Methodology: Part 2	132
Data generation and coding framework	132
3.2.1 Generating data	132
(i) The research participants: an overview	132
(ii) Recruitment of participants	133
(iii) The interview data.....	138
(iv) The essay data	142
3.2.2 Coding the interview data	142
(i) The Self.....	146
(ii) Relationships	148
(iii) Essay Practices	149
3.2.3 Conclusion to methodology and next steps	150
Chapter 4: Analysis Part 1	152
Analysing the student essay writers: self-identity, context and self-management	152
4.1 Constructing the vignettes.....	152
4.2 Categories emerging from the vignettes.....	153
(i) Defining the categories.....	153
(ii) Categories applied to individual students	155
4.3 Comparison of students as essay writers	161
(i) Self-identity	162
(ii) Discussion.....	171
(iii) Relationship with the context.....	173
(iv) Discussion.....	183
(v) Self-management: self-awareness and sense of control.....	185
(vi) Discussion.....	192
4.4 Concluding discussion to first part of analysis	193
(i) Severity of dyslexia.....	193
(ii) Feature of dyslexic profiles as described in accounts	194
(iii) Effects of working memory	195
(iv) Dyslexia and kinds of learning	195
Chapter 5: Analysis Part 2	197
Strategies, plans and essay texts	197
5.1 Strategies for achieving coherence	198
(i) Overview of strategies.....	198
(ii) Further interrogation	200
Do the two overarching categories in themselves have a role in predisposing towards success or struggle?.....	201
Are there any particular strategies that seem more effective than others?	202

Are there factors common to all approaches that are enabling or limiting?	205
(iii) Global level factors	205
(iv) Local coherence	208
(v) Discussion.....	210
5.2 Pre-writing plans	217
(i) Overview of essays	217
(ii) Essay plans	218
(iii) Discussion	220
5.3 Evolving and final essays.....	221
(i) The development of global coherence.....	221
(ii) Discussion.....	229
(iii) The development of local coherence	231
(iv) Spelling and punctuation.....	236
(v) Discussion.....	241
5.4 Concluding comments on analysis	243
Chapter 6: Conclusion	245
Understanding differences in essay writing: conclusions, implications and reflection	245
6.1 Summary and conclusions	245
(i) The relationship between dyslexia and essay-writing	249
(ii) The relationship between difficulties and strategies	250
(iii) The variation in essay development and communication breakdown	252
(iv) The effects of dyslexia made visible.....	253
6.2 Implications.....	255
(i) For the support process	255
(ii) For future research	258
6.3 Reflection	259
References	263
Appendix 1	285
Example definitions of dyslexia.....	285
Appendix 2	288
Essay Writing Research: Information for Prospective Participants.....	288
Appendix 3a	291
Initial Interview guide	291
Appendix 3b	293
Initial Interview Guide: Students not identified as dyslexic.....	293
Appendix 3c.....	294
Planning interview guide.....	294
Appendix 3d	295
Retrospective Interview guide	295

Appendix 4	296
Vignettes of student essay writers	296
Appendix 5	312
Analysis of texts identified as 'difficult' for the reader	312

List of Figures

Fig. 2.1: Establishing search boundaries	29
Fig. 2.2: Exploring 'be explicit' with one student-writer (taken from Lillis (2001:57)).....	78
Fig. 2.3: Dialogue with Student N (Lillis 2001:82).....	82
Fig. 2.5: Representation of argument (adapted from Figure 3.4 Andrews 2010:47)	90
Fig 3.1: Example of open coding: Rob; Initial interview	144
Fig. 3.2: Example of categorising from NVivo	145
Fig. 3.3: 'Self' coding diagram from NVivo	146
Fig. 3.4: 'Relationships' coding diagram from NVivo	148
Fig. 3.5a: 'Essay practices/Understandings' coding diagram from NVivo	149
Fig. 3.5b: 'Essay practices/Strategies' coding diagram from NVivo	149
Fig. 4.1: Category labels developed from vignettes	153
Fig. 4.2: Framework of analysis.....	161
Fig. 4.4: 'Voices' influencing student writers	173
Fig.4.5: Chain of interacting factors	191
Fig. 5.1: Self-talk in plans	219
Fig. 5.2: Differences in reference to title in plans	220
Fig. 5.3: Categories describing line of argument	222
Fig. 5.4: Clear discourse theme	224
Fig. 5.5: Content information added into clear structure ...	224
Fig. 5.6: Adam's changes in headings	225
Fig. 5.7: Simultaneous development of content and structure	226
Fig. 5.9: Shared knowledge or lack of referencing?	228
Fig. 5.10: Minor word changes to increase clarity	232
Fig. 5.11: Changes in sentence boundaries	232
Fig. 5.12: Examples of text that is 'difficult' for the reader	234
Fig. 5.13: Punctuation example sentence, Rob	239
Fig. 5.14: Punctuation example sentence, Jenny	240

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Structure of investigation	31
Table 2.2: Summary of causal theories	48
Table 2.3: Glossary of linguistic terms.....	86
Table 3.1: Profile of the research participants	132
Table 3.2: Timetable of interviews and evolving decisions.....	142
Table 3.3: Addressing the research question	151
Table 4.1: Student self-identities and relationships with context	156
Table 4.2: Students' self-management, strategies and difficulties.....	158
Table 4.3: Profiles of individual students.....	160
Table 4.4: Experience of transition to university expectations	165
Table 4.5: Different responses to dyslexia	168
Table 4.6: Constructions of 'self as writer'	170
Table 4.7: Support use.....	181
Table 4.8: Relationships with 'voices' from context	182
Table 4.9: Students' comments about spelling	186
Table 4.10: Self-management: awareness and sense of control	192
Table 5.1: Summary descriptions of strategies	200
Table 5.2: Strategies within overarching categories	201
Table 5.3: Summary of planning, reading and note making strategies	204
Table 5.4: Pre-writing planning strategies.....	204
Table 5.5: Summary of enabling and limiting factors.....	210
Table 5.6: Essay titles and assessed marks.....	218
Table 5.7: Numbers of evolving essay texts	221
Table 5.8: Dimensions of developing global coherence	229
Table 5.9: Spelling errors in evolving and final essay	237
Table 5.10: Dimensions of developing local coherence	241
Table 6.1: Constellations of difference.....	248

Glossary of Abbreviations

AD(H)D.....	Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder
ADSHE.....	Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education
ASSIST.....	Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students
BDA.....	British Dyslexia Association
BERA.....	British Educational Research Association
BPS.....	British Psychological Society
DCD.....	Developmental Coordination Disorder
DDA.....	Disability Discrimination Act
DfES.....	Department for Education and Science
DSA.....	Disabled Students' Allowances
HE.....	Higher Education
HEFCE.....	Higher Education Funding Council for England
IDA.....	International Dyslexia Association
LD.....	Learning Disabilities
NNAC.....	National Network of Assessment Centres
QAA.....	Quality Assurance Agency
RAE.....	Research Assessment Exercise
SAQ.....	Student Authorship Questionnaire
SASC.....	SpLD Assessment Standards Committee
SENDA.....	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act
SFE.....	Student Finance England
SLI.....	Specific Language Impairment
SpLD.....	Specific Learning Difficulties
STEC.....	SpLD Test Evaluation Committee
WAC.....	Writing Across the Curriculum
WID.....	Writing in the Disciplines

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background, context and overview of the thesis

1.1 Research question and background

This study is situated within an Academic Support Service in a pre-1992 UK university and is concerned with HE student essay writers who are identified as dyslexic. The study is motivated by my experience of working with these writers and noting the enormity of difference between them. These include differences in approach and affective response to writing and to dyslexia, and in the extent and kinds of difficulty that occur in essay texts. Alongside this, is the common feature that these writers are all identified as dyslexic, according to what in HE are agreed assessment criteria.

The study is further motivated by the fact that cognitive and literacy difficulties identified in dyslexia assessments seem not to explain satisfactorily the differences I find in essay writing. There is a gap between cognitive and achievement profiles detailed in assessments and the difficulties (or not) experienced with essays. This can be seen as a gap between the cognitive features of dyslexia and the actual experience of it in a particular learning and social context. This gap widens still further if we juxtapose dyslexia-related cognitive explanations of essay writing difficulty with increasingly dominant views of essay writing as social practice or indeed a plurality of practices. It seems that, whilst dyslexia-related reading difficulties have been embedded within mainstream theories of reading development, this has not occurred for academic writing. Though many acknowledge the importance of context to understandings of dyslexia and of writing, what seems to be unexplored is what fills the gap between cognitive profile and context in the specific environment of essay writing. My purpose in the study therefore is to explore how differences in essay writing experience and essay texts are constituted amongst a sample of HE student essay writers identified as dyslexic, taking a view of dyslexia and writing together in context. By essay writing

experience, I mean differences in students' understandings of what is expected, differences in their perceptions of themselves as writers and differences in how they view the whole context of essay writing. By differences in essay texts, I am interested in differences in approaches to and difficulties with essay structure and academic language.

My approach to the study is influenced by my own work experience, which includes a background in classics and French, work as a French teacher, later work in adult literacy, culminating at the point of conducting this study in my role as an academic support tutor working with students identified as dyslexic. As well as a great curiosity about dyslexia, my experience generated an interest in language, in terms of why communication is successful or not. This is always more subtle than generalised lists of dyslexia-related language difficulty would suggest, such as 'difficulty with spelling and grammar and with organising writing'. At the same time my adult literacy experience foregrounded the social practices of writing, the power relationships involved and how writing in one context does not transfer to another.

In the HE setting, my interest in the social practices of writing became focused on the concept of academic literacies. This approach to academic writing calls for closer attention to the effects of different disciplinary knowledge-making practices on writers and on different ways of writing (Hodgson & Harris 2012). In a climate of widening participation and diversity in the student population, it is seen as increasingly relevant and important (Ivanic & Lea 2006; Haggis 2006) and is emerging more strongly into mainstream thinking about academic writing (Lillis & Scott 2007). The meaning and implications of the approach are discussed in more detail in the literature review. My interest is in how this perspective on writing can be set alongside dyslexia.

There appears to be some conflict between an academic literacies approach to writing and the predominantly cognitive approach to dyslexia implicit in my work. My role as a practitioner in the academic support setting requires me to discuss with students the

cognitive profiles found in dyslexia assessments and suggest how they might contribute to writing problems. Further conflict arises from my involvement in the operation of university systems that are justified mainly by a cognitive approach to dyslexia. Part of my purpose in this study therefore is to achieve some consistency in my approach to dyslexia and essay writing that includes a social practice perspective but also incorporates the predominantly cognitive understandings of dyslexia.

There are a number of possible audiences for the study. For practitioners working in HE with students identified as dyslexic, I hope the study contributes to the development of thinking in work with these students on academic writing. For the research field, where work on essay writing is sparse, the study offers a practitioner perspective that examines dyslexia within the practices of academic writing. It may also be useful to academic tutors with an interest in dyslexia. With this audience in mind, I assume some knowledge of dyslexia in my reader and do not define it at a very basic level.

1.2 The context of the study

The study involves the two areas of dyslexia and essay writing from a practitioner's perspective. Although part of the aim of the study is to explore connections between the two areas, for now I deal with them separately.

(i) The dyslexia context

Understandings of dyslexia are beset by contested theories, and by different discourses and agendas applied by and to a variety of stakeholders. Teachers observe different behavioural manifestations of dyslexia and confusion about the boundaries and even the very existence of dyslexia still prevails. Debates surround the criteria for identification while at the same time policy makers and funding gatekeepers create clear cut-off points in the attempt to offer guidance and allocate financial support (Reid 2009; Riddick 2010).

My own sense of inconsistency is therefore understandable and can be seen as a reflection of competing theories and approaches to dyslexia in the wider HE context. I therefore outline the bigger picture by discussing differences in definitions of dyslexia, misleading transparency in its identification and its place in the disability framework and in overall cultural change in HE. All of these factors inform the practitioner's work in this area.

Definitions

Requests for a clear explanation of dyslexia are always problematic as it is generally agreed that dyslexia is difficult to define (Pavey, Meehan, & Waugh 2010). Appendix 1 gives examples of definitions and the problem is immediately apparent. It is defined according to different characteristics and at behavioural, cognitive and biological levels (Frith 1999; Price & Skinner 2007; Reid 2009). The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) (2012) limits the definition to phonological difficulties at the single word level. The British Psychological Society (BPS) (1999) includes only behavioural characteristics of reading and spelling. A definition by Reid (2009) includes difficulties with memory, speed of processing, time management, co-ordination and automaticity and suggests that visual and/or phonological processes may be involved. McLoughlin, Leather and Stringer (2002) emphasise working memory as a key feature for adults.

It is also evident that definitions serve different purposes. Reid (2009) suggests that the IDA definition is for research purposes because it applies clear and measurable dimensions. Reid's own definition (2009) is practitioner-oriented, aimed at raising awareness and informing intervention. The BPS report (1999) and the Rose Review (2009) have implications for identification and intervention with younger children and McLoughlin et al. (2002:14) describe their definition as a 'pragmatic model' most useful for working with adults.

A further problem is that definitions present different conceptualisations of dyslexia. The International Dyslexia Association refers to a deficit 'in the phonological component of language' that is 'neurological in origin'. The Rose Review states

that 'It [dyslexia] is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.' A more socio-cultural approach is reflected in the definition of Cooper (2006, cited in Pavey et al. 2010) (Appendix 1), which suggests that the concept of dyslexia is constructed by cultural beliefs, such as what society values as 'intelligence'.

There is further discussion in the literature review of the contribution of definitions and different causal theories of dyslexia to the understanding of essay writing difficulty. The brief discussion here is to illustrate the potential for confusion and concern amongst learners identified as dyslexic and within the wider HE context.

Identification

Legally supported 'reasonable adjustments' to assessment of examinations and coursework require that clear boundaries can be identified between those who qualify and those who do not (Riddell & Weedon 2006). In spite of criticisms in the wider field of a lack of clarity in identifying these boundaries (Rice & Brooks 2004), the criteria and procedures relating to dyslexia assessments for HE students are strictly governed for the purpose of application for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA). The SpLD Working Group (2005) formulated a definition of dyslexia (Appendix 1) and set out the tests to be used for identification purposes by educational psychologists and specialist teachers and regulations came into effect in 2008. The SpLD Test Evaluation Committee (STEC) updates the list of permitted tests and the expected format for writing the assessment report is available on the website of the SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC).

These procedures might achieve a re-assuring appearance of consistency and transparency in their gate-keeping role. Yet this consistency in itself does not lead to greater understanding of individual difficulty or lack of difficulty in particular study settings. There is also a danger that dyslexia becomes defined by the tests that identify it. Variation in test results is expected. This may occur in varying problems with aspects of cognitive processing (working memory, phonological processing, speed of processing), varying

patterns of literacy difficulties (as defined by permitted standardised tests), and variation in underlying ability, which must be within or above the average range. The problem is that this variation does not predict or explain responses in different learning situations. Even though context and previous experience are acknowledged as important (Singleton 1999), there is little research that looks closely at a specific area of learning in the HE context, hence the purpose in this study.

The disability setting and wider cultural change

Whilst the disability setting and wider cultural change in HE have been a positive force for change, difficulties remain which re-enforce the picture of competing values in relation to dyslexia. It is suggested that the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1995) and ensuing disability legislation has had an important influence on the rapid increase in numbers of students identified as dyslexic entering HE. As a percentage of students with a disability, those with dyslexia increased from 15% in 1994/5 to 49% in 2002/2003 (Riddell & Weedon 2006). The requirement for 'reasonable adjustments', which came into force in HE through the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) (2002), had a major impact on students, support services and academic staff (Fuller, Riddell, & Weedon 2009b). SENDA includes anticipatory duties, which require that learning, teaching and assessment practices are made more inclusive in anticipation of student needs rather than as an ad hoc response to individual students (Hurst 2009). All of this has occurred amongst significant cultural change in HE as a whole. In general terms, this is identified as a focus on 'widening participation' in HE (Riddell, Tinklin, & Wilson 2005); an emphasis on students as consumers (Molesworth, Nixon, & Scullion 2009); and moves towards systems for audit and accountability described as managerialism (Riddell, Weedon, Fuller, Healey, Hurst, Kelly, Piggott 2007).

One source of inconsistency is that different models of disability can be seen operating in relation to dyslexia. In spite of allegiance to a social model in HE (Hurst 2009), remnants of the medical model, with its view of impairment as an individual deficiency in need of medical or other remediation, remain (Hurst 2009). It is argued

that this model of disability and a concomitant deficit model of dyslexia are inherent in the DSA process (Riddell et al. 2005). This stems from the DSA requirement to have cognitive problems identified in order to justify the financing of specialist equipment and individual support to remediate the problem. A medical approach is also inherent in debates about accurate 'diagnosis' of dyslexia according to statistical measurement and tests (Weedon & Riddell 2009).

Nevertheless, the social model of disability is seen as immensely significant in shifting the focus from individual deficit to the social and cultural barriers that have a disabling effect on impairment (Fuller, Riddell, & Weedon 2009a). However, issues surrounding dyslexia with its focus on learning are likely to be more complex than resolving physical barriers (Weedon & Riddell 2009). This is illustrated in the thinking behind the concepts of 'reasonable adjustments' and 'anticipatory duties' as each imply different conceptualisations of dyslexia. 'Anticipatory duties' require the development of teaching and assessment appropriate for all learners. This situates dyslexia as a difference along a continuum, as one of many differences in the population as a whole. On the other hand, as already discussed, 'reasonable adjustments' are justified by an apparently clear demarcation between those who are dyslexic and those who are not. This way of thinking is emphasised by organisations such as the British Dyslexia Association (BDA), who, in their campaigns for the recognition of dyslexia, argue that a dyslexic individual is intrinsically different from the rest of the population and that that difference will cause disadvantage. This apparent lack of consistency between 'reasonable adjustments' and 'anticipatory duties' makes the implementation of 'reasonable adjustments' more complicated and generates anxiety about standards for academic tutors (Riddell et al. 2007), and confusion for the individuals concerned.

The picture is complicated still further by criticisms of the social model. Some say that emphasis on social barriers takes too little account of the effects of physical or cognitive impairments. A bio-psycho-social model is preferred, that recognises more clearly differences within the same impairment and variation in individual

effects (Shakespeare 2006). It is further suggested that an analysis of identity is helpful in understanding models of disability (Roberts, Georgeson, & Kelly 2009). Roberts et al. (2009:101) find that students' accounts show them to be 'forming and re-forming their identities within a "sea" of competing and sometimes conflicting narratives' and that none drew on social or medical models of disability to construct their identity. They suggest that different understandings arise in response to culturally diverse prior experience of education and work. This alludes more closely to a socio-cultural model of dyslexia (Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001; Cooper 2006 in Pavey et al. 2010), suggesting it to be a fluid phenomenon that has different effects at different times and in different contexts.

It is suggested that questions and confusion around dyslexia from academic staff have arisen more strongly because of wider cultural change in HE. In a four year project, Fuller et al. (2009a) evaluated the learning experience of disabled students in four universities, comparing pre- and post- 1992 universities with a focus on inclusion. They suggest that, whilst systems for audit and accountability (such as the 28 precepts in the Code of Practice of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (2010) and the benchmarking of disabled student by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)) have been positive in highlighting a need to respond to disabled students, they have also had a negative effect. Interview accounts with academic staff describe increasing demands on time because of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), and the overall increase in student numbers. It then becomes increasingly difficult to respond to yet further requirements to adapt teaching and materials and to spend more time with students because of disability (Fuller et al. 2009b). Whilst they found differences within and between universities, an inclusive approach was not evident on a large scale. The picture suggests that students identified as dyslexic are likely to meet different responses to their dyslexia and differing attitudes to requests for 'reasonable adjustments'.

It can also be said that 'widening participation' policies have a role in blurring the boundaries of dyslexia. The policy is designed to increase the participation in HE of those from 'disadvantaged

communities' and to ensure that 'social background does not inhibit access to, and success within, HE' (Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) 2013). As part of the same project described above Riddell et al.(2007) found that disability was incorporated differently within the widening participation agenda, with one university having a good understanding of dyslexia and others questioning the boundaries between disability and factors arising from disadvantaged backgrounds. The co-existence of social disadvantage and dyslexia is obviously a complicating factor. This is of particular relevance to essay writing, where factors such as language opportunity and history and previous writing experience become important.

It is not difficult to see how these models of dyslexia and disability also have relevance to the culture of support (Herrington 2001; Pollak 2005). Weedon and Riddell (2009) found that students' levels of access to support or lack of access and reasons for requesting it varied between universities and they suggest that one reason for this is variation in how students perceived it. They consider that this is influenced by differences in learning history and previous experience of support. From an institutional perspective, the kind of support on offer can reflect the historical foundations and funding regimes of the service; different settings imply different conceptions of dyslexia, even if not enacted in practice.

The service of relevance in this study supports all students requesting advice on academic work other than those with international status and all students identified or in the process of being identified as dyslexic. It is well-embedded within the university and in receipt of central funding. This leaves the decision to take on the identification of dyslexia more open to negotiation because support is not conditional upon it. Other services are situated within disability units and others as discrete dyslexia services, separate from other sources of learning support. In some cases staffing is funded through the Disabled Students' Allowances attached to individual students. Services reliant on this funding can imply a deficit medical model of dyslexia, where support is conditional upon the identification of dyslexia. On-going increase in

numbers accessing services (Pollak 2009) and managerialist policies and systems have also had an effect (Pollak 2005). These factors represent a change from the enterprise and innovation of HEFCE funded projects of the early 1990s towards a systems-oriented service, which sometimes struggles to balance genuine learning development with accountability to national policy.

The picture so far given illustrates how the multiplicity of approaches to dyslexia found at a personal level is a reflection of national and institutional policy requirements. A similar picture can be found in relation to essay writing.

(ii) The essay writing context

Essay writing has long been seen as important to student assessment and learning (Hounsell 1997) and it continues to be viewed as a proportionately significant element (Hodgson & Harris 2012; Hyland 2009; McCune 2004) in spite of increased attention to digital literacies (Lea & Jones 2011). However, despite its continuing predominance, it is difficult to define and lacks a consistent theoretical framework in the HE context.

Defining the academic essay

Womack (1993:43) suggests that essays lack 'formal and functional specification', that conceptions of essays have evolved from classical rhetoric, to renaissance practices of translation and imitation to become a literary genre indicating cultivated humanism. He suggests that, with the introduction of an assessment role in the nineteenth century arising from examinations for civil service entry, it has today become a 'medium for assessing [a] mixture of intellectual, moral and cultural qualities' (1993:44). Ballard and Clanchy (1988) propose four criteria which underlie judgements of quality: relevance and adequacy of the topic; evidence of wide and critical reading; demonstration of a reasoned argument; and competent presentation. Hyland (2009:132) describes the student essay as an ill-defined genre, but overall it can be said to require the defence or explanation of a position in response to literature sources. He suggests it is a 'key acculturation practice'. Yet there are

disciplinary differences in what students need to know. Creme and Lea (2009), for example, quote views of essay requirements given by representatives of different disciplines. Views include the need for strong evidence, critical analysis, independent thought, coherent organisation and relevance but the tutors interviewed prioritise these features differently and in particular have differing views on levels of personal involvement and how personal opinion can be expressed.

A theoretical framework: varying possibilities

The academic essay has had an unquestioned standing in the HE context. It used to be expected that students came to university knowing how to write essays and the culture surrounding them was undisputed. Turner (1999) calls this a culture of transparency in which elitist conventions of language, reasoning and argument, based on positivist values, become treated as a universal norm. However, widening participation and cultural change in the HE sector mean that writing ability can no longer be assumed in the main body of the student population (as reported by Murray & Kirton 2006 and others from Royal Literary fund projects) and this realisation has prompted calls for 'a theoretical and practical "mainstream" approach to teaching writing that takes into account the complexities of academic writing and the diverse backgrounds of students in UK universities' (Wingate & Tribble 2012:482).

In spite of increasing recognition that students from all backgrounds need support with academic writing (Ganobcsik-Williams 2004; 2006), there is little clarity about the philosophies underpinning this support and whether it should be separate from or integral to disciplinary teaching and learning. This is in contrast to work in the US, where freshman composition classes and discussion of Writing in the Disciplines (WID) or Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) has long been embedded in mainstream post-secondary culture (Tomic 2006). In the UK, effort in the main has been focused on groups defined as 'in need' (e.g. those with dyslexia, from overseas or from 'non-traditional' or 'disadvantaged' backgrounds) and lacking necessary skills (Haggis 2006). This has resulted in a response that is essentially remedial.

It is clear that the teaching of writing is strongly associated with different conceptions of writing and literacy in general. In discussion of my own position, I have already outlined the increasing interest in an academic literacies approach to academic writing. Fundamental to this is a view of literacy as a set of practices that are multiple and which vary with historical and cultural context (Street 1997). This relates to Street's ideological model of literacy (2003; 1984) and Lankshear's critical literacy (1999), where priority is given to making explicit the grounds for the social practices of particular forms of literacy. From this perspective, lack of explicit recognition of the practices of academic writing is problematic for student writers (Lillis 2006).

A deficit, remedial approach is reflected in what Ganobcsik-Williams (2004:5) identifies as perceptions of a 'literacy crisis' in UK higher education. She quotes media headlines such as 'Student spelling and grammar at "crisis" levels' (Smithers, *Guardian*, 1 March 2003); 'Students "cannot write essays"' (Garner, *Independent*, 6 March 2004)'. This kind of thinking treats essay writing as a set of atomised literacy skills that can be transferred to other settings. It also alludes to particular models of literacy, such as Lankshear's operational literacy (1999) and the autonomous model described by Street (2003; 1984). Both of these signify competence in the language system; literacy is viewed as a neutral, transparent medium for communication.

A further conceptualisation of writing acknowledges the importance of cultural meanings. This is referred to as an apprenticeship or enculturation approach (Hyland 2002), which resonates with Lankshear's cultural literacy (1999). However, this approach is criticised for maintaining uncritically the values inherent in the academic setting (Hyland 2009). Also, in an environment where modular courses are increasing (Ivanic & Lea 2006), it fails to acknowledge the effects on writers of different values and different ways of writing in different disciplines (Lillis 2001).

Another approach focuses on the individual writer. For example, researchers aim to model the cognitive processes that occur in

individual writers as they write (Hayes 2012). Whilst this has had a major influence on the teaching of writing, particularly in the US (Ganobcsik-Williams 2004), it is criticised for its connotations of within-person deficit where difficulties occur (Lillis 2001). A further approach that foregrounds individual writers is an expressivist approach, which emphasises self-expression and creativity as a developmental stage in writing (Elbow 2000).

These different conceptions are discussed further in the literature review, but here serve to illustrate the many different layers of thinking associated with academic essays. Different conceptions should not necessarily be viewed as alternatives: proponents of an academic literacies model for example do not dismiss the need for accurate spelling and grammar or a need to learn the ways of the disciplinary culture, but consider that, on their own, they are an inadequate representation of what is involved (Lea & Street 1998). Lankshear's representation of a 3D view of operational, cultural and critical approaches to literacy is also helpful (1999).

(iii) Bringing together the two areas of study

The two areas of dyslexia and essay writing might seem to be two different areas of study. However, whilst there are differences, there are also parallels. We can see similarities between deficit models of academic writing and of dyslexia. From a deficit viewpoint, difficulties with essay writing are viewed as lacking the necessary skills, and for those identified as dyslexic, this lack is attributed to dyslexia. For those not identified as dyslexic, it is attributed to social background, lack of opportunity or lack of ability.

We can also see parallels when essays and dyslexia are seen as culturally constructed. Just as students identified as dyslexic construct their identities as dyslexic from 'a "sea" of competing and sometimes conflicting narratives' (Roberts et al. 2009:101), writing identities are similarly made available from surrounding cultural values and previous experience (Hyland 2002). The interest in this study is to attempt to avoid what seems to be an artificial

separation between dyslexic and other aspects of identity and to explore them together.

Parallels are also likely between cognitive approaches in both fields. Cognitive psychology has dominated research in dyslexia and provided a strong basis of knowledge in spite of continuing debates (Rice & Brooks 2004). Similarly, there is a strong body of cognitive research into writing processes (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1987; Hayes 2012; Kellogg 1994). It would be expected that connections can be made between them, though these are not discussed in the dyslexia literature (but see Price 2006).

The main difference between the two areas of study seems to be that different approaches are valued differently in each field. In the field of dyslexia, it still seems to be the case that empirical research from a cognitive, biological or neurological perspective holds sway, often with implications of deficit (Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001). A cognitive skill-based approach to literacy still prevails also (Wearmouth, Soler, & Reid 2003; Chanock 2007), with an allegiance to an autonomous model (Street 2003; 1984). There are of course some examples of qualitative research and collections of student accounts (e.g. Price 2006; Pollak 2005; Riddick 2010) but the recognised knowledge base for dyslexia that informs assessment and policy comes from the cognitive or scientific field. In the field of academic writing, it seems that the research picture is more broadly based in terms of disciplinary origins. The work of Hayes (2012) continues alongside work from an academic literacies perspective (Ivanic 1998; Lillis 2001).

In this study therefore, I hope to begin to redress this imbalance in research perspectives between the two fields. As already suggested an academic literacies approach has increasingly become part of mainstream thinking about academic writing. My purpose therefore is to view a sample of essay writers identified as dyslexic from this perspective. At the same time the cognitive parallels between dyslexia and writing processes cannot be ignored. In the literature review, therefore, as well as exploring academic literacies in detail,

I consider whether this approach can fully accommodate a study involving dyslexia.

1.3 Terminology used

Language in relation to disability is a sensitive area and potentially confusing. I therefore briefly discuss my rationale for the terms used. The participants in the study all have an assessment which identifies dyslexia. I use this in preference to the umbrella term specific learning difficulty (SpLD), which can include dyspraxia/developmental coordination disorder (DCD), dyscalculia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder (ADHD) or auditory processing disorder (BDA 2013). SpLD is useful as a reminder that learning in a specific area is implicated rather than a generalised learning difficulty and it is often applied in recognition of the frequent co-existence of more than one area of difficulty. The fact that students have an assessment identifying dyslexia suggests that this has the dominant effect on their learning, though situations sometimes arise where it is clear that other factors are involved. It is then a matter of discussion with the individuals concerned as to the usefulness of identifying additional SpLDs. This is discussed further in the literature review.

Use of language is sensitive also because of its power to indicate stance towards disability. Some, for example, prefer specific learning difference (Pollak 2009) as an indicator of a social model of disability rather than the more medical position implied in 'difficulty'. In this study I avoid medical terminology wherever possible and for this reason refer to 'students identified as dyslexic'. This avoids the term 'diagnosed' and is preferable to 'students with dyslexia', which also has medical overtones. Occasionally, where this phrase makes the syntax cumbersome I use 'dyslexic students', but acknowledge all the concerns with this (that it foregrounds the dyslexia not the person). I also use 'indicators' rather than 'symptoms' and 'co-occurring' rather than 'co-morbid'. I have some concerns about the term 'support' as it can imply deficit or have patronising overtones. The difficulty with how to describe

the role is suggested by the variety of names given to it in different universities (e.g. learning advisors, study advisors). In my setting the term used is Academic Support Tutor. I therefore retain 'support' while acknowledging the concerns.

The issue of terminology arises also in discussing literature that uses a wide variety of terms, including those with medical inferences (deficit, symptoms etc.) and US studies that often refer only to 'learning disabilities'. To avoid confusion, I retain the terms used in the literature and, in the case of US studies, make clear where possible if the term seems to imply more than dyslexia.

1.4 Plan of the thesis

The thesis follows a traditional pattern of literature review, methodology, analysis (including discussion) and conclusion. The literature review consists of three parts with an introduction to the whole. In the first part, I explore the strength of connections between dyslexia and essay writing. I discuss whether definitions are helpful and what different causal theories of dyslexia might tell us. I also discuss research into dyslexia and essay writing and consider its purpose, methods and limitations. Perceptions of dyslexia in context and the theme of identity are then followed up further. In the second part, I discuss the theoretical underpinnings of academic literacies and its implications for a more broadly based understanding of student essay writing. Other perspectives on writing are considered for their relevance to dyslexia. I then discuss ways of analysing text that are consistent with a social practice approach to writing and which avoid treating text as separate from the writer. In the third part, I consider the ways in which an academic literacies position can and cannot accommodate a study of dyslexia and essay writing and justify ways of combining this approach with others while remaining theoretically consistent.

The methodology is divided into two parts. The first explains the theoretical basis for the methods and analysis; the second discusses the participant group and sets out the methods used and how the data were analysed. In an attempt to retain consistency between my theoretical standpoint and methodology, I take a dual

approach according to the interpretive practice of Gubrium and Holstein (2000) which focuses on the 'how' and the 'what'. I consider the 'how' of the student experience of writing and the 'what' of the strategies they adopt and what their essay texts reveal.

The analysis consists of two chapters that follow the two strands of the 'how' and the 'what'. The first consists of analysis of interview data with student writers as they write a single coursework essay. These interviews are intended to capture their understandings about essays in general and their thinking as they write a single essay over a real world time scale. The second includes interview data on their strategies, and also their essay plans (where applicable), evolving essay text and the final essay submitted. I attempt to summarise findings and discuss the analysis throughout.

Finally, I state the conclusions in response to the research question along with the implications for my work setting and for further research. I also discuss the contribution and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Dyslexia, essay writing and academic literacies: meeting points and departures

2.1 Introduction

The aim in this literature review is to develop a theoretical position as a starting point for the research and to explore work that is of relevance in the areas of dyslexia and essay writing in HE. This is with a view to providing a basis for my question of how differences in essay writing experience and outcome are constituted. In accordance with the rationale already discussed, this involves setting what we know about dyslexia and essay writing alongside an academic literacies position on academic writing. The first stage of this process therefore is to explore different aspects of the dyslexia literature to examine connections between dyslexia and essay writing. Secondly, with the aim of setting academic essay writing within a theoretical framework, I examine the theoretical and practical implications that are revealed by taking an academic literacies perspective. This includes a discussion of ways of analysing essay texts. Thirdly, I consider the relevance of other approaches to writing that may be of particular interest to a study involving dyslexia. Finally, I determine the meeting points and departures between dyslexia and an academic literacies approach.

The literature review is divided into three sections: the first examines the place of dyslexia in the essay writing experience; the second looks beyond dyslexia to view theoretical perspectives on essay writing; the third establishes the meeting points and departures between the two areas.

2.2 Approaches to reviewing the literature

As the review explores two major research fields, it is important to establish boundaries. Figure 2.1 represents how these were identified.

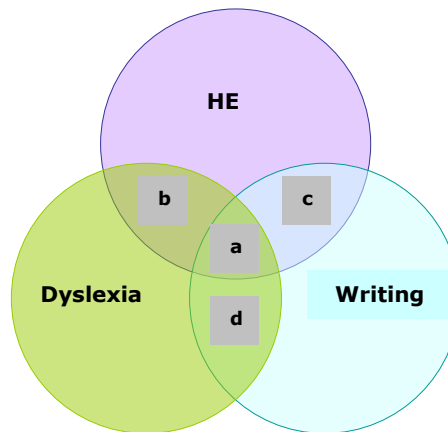


Fig. 2.1: Establishing search boundaries

Point 'a', at the intersection of dyslexia, writing and HE, is the focus of investigation. Searches of 'dyslexia, essay writing and HE' gave no results. I therefore selected the most relevant work from searches of 'dyslexia, writing and HE'. I am as confident as it is possible to be that I have explored this effectively. The intersections at points 'b', 'c' and 'd' represent the relationships between dyslexia in HE, writing in HE and writing and dyslexia. These categories, along with 'academic literacies' were my main search criteria.

My strategy for finding relevant literature began with re-visiting familiar names. In both writing and dyslexia I was already aware of the key researchers that were connected with particular theories. In some instances, it was possible to trace the changes and developments in thinking over time, for example in the work of Frith (1997;1999;2005), Snowling (2000;2001;2003;2008;2009) and Fawcett and Nicolson (2001;2004;2008) and Nicolson and Fawcett (2001;2004;2008) on dyslexia; Hayes and Flower (1980;1983) and Hayes (1996;2012) on cognitive approaches to

writing; and Lea and Street (1998;2003;2004;2011) on academic literacies. I also use 'big picture' but detailed accounts on writing, such as the work of Hyland (2002;2009), Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and Ganobcsik-Williams (2004;2006). These commentators give a full picture of a range of perspectives and comparisons are therefore possible, though it is important to be aware of their own preferences.

Further investigation follows up relevant references in work such as the above and in data-base searches, using the terms identified. Databases used were British Education Index, Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) and PsycINFO. This combination reliably captures the fields of dyslexia and writing. The use of ERIC means that work in the US. is included. This is important because of the long history of teaching writing in US universities in comparison with the UK. PsycINFO also incorporates cognitive and neurological research on dyslexia.

Even though I am confident of capturing the fields, a number of issues emerged during the process. The first involves decisions on how far to 'drill down' in theoretical terms, particularly in relation to academic literacies. This approach is influenced by a range of anthropological, socio-cultural and linguistic theories and I was selective in the original works I examined. I focus on theorists such as Bakhtin, Fairclough, Gee, Street and Halliday, but do not directly explore, for example, anthropological studies, or the work of Foucault and Vygotsky, all of which are applied to writing from an academic literacies perspective. I choose instead to focus on how others linked their work on writing to these major theorists.

A second issue involves the dating of sources. I was concerned about the use of some 'old' references. As previously stated, in some cases this allows tracing developments in the work of individual researchers. In others, it is noticeable that 'old' theories are still referenced in current work. The early work of Halliday (1989; 1994), for example, is frequently applied. Often quoted also is work on cognitive process approaches from their beginnings in the 1980s (Hayes & Flower 1980; Bereiter and Scardamalia 1987;

Daiute 1984). Also quoted is old but seminal work on writing, mainly in HE (Bartholomae 1985; Hounsell 1984; Ballard & Clanchy 1988; Shaughnessy 1977). The use of these sources therefore seems justified. Finally, there is a sparsity of research into dyslexia and essay writing in HE. The review therefore includes some extrapolation from one area to another, for example how the cognitive effects of dyslexia on reading might be extrapolated to writing and how cognitive research in writing might be applied to dyslexia. I have tried to make clear when this is the basis of my thinking.

Judgements were necessary throughout about what was relevant and useful and the breakdown of the literature review into the questions shown in Table 2.1. guided decisions about this.

Part 1: Dyslexia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we learn from existing research into essay writing and dyslexia? • What contribution do the different theories of dyslexia make to understanding essay writing experience and difficulties? • How adequate are they for understanding the very different experiences found in my work context? • What other ways are there of conceptualising dyslexia that would add to understanding?
Part 2: Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What dimensions are opened up by an academic literacies view of academic writing in terms of understanding the dilemmas faced by student writers? • How does this perspective differ from other views of writing?
A study of dyslexia and writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can the two research areas be combined to develop a theoretically consistent basis for the study?

Table 2.1: Structure of investigation

I attempt to be critical in my approach and interpret this according to Moon's view of critical depth (Moon 2008). She suggests that this is marked by wide-ranging, well-structured, reflective examination of evidence. However, she questions the use of highly structured processes for scrutinising text. This is in contrast to Hart (1998) who suggests the application of Toulmin's model (discussed in chapter 2) in order to test the adequacy of an argument (Toulmin 1958 in Mitchell & Riddle 2000). Instead, Moon suggests

that depth in critical thinking is a developmental process, rather than a set of skills, related to factors such as knowledge base, context, personal experience and academic assertiveness. I was aware of these issues in the writing of this review, through the restructuring of existing knowledge, a combining with new knowledge and an increasing confidence in my own argument and voice as the writing developed.

Critical analysis of the work of others also involves ethical dimensions. Guidelines on educational research writing (British Educational Research Association (BERA) 2000) suggest that writers should make their intentions and audiences clear; write in a lucid style that communicates effectively; and make the methodology explicit enough for others to conduct a similar study. In terms of the values of the research, BERA emphasises the importance of truth and academic integrity in the reporting of the work of others. BERA also states that the role and position of the researcher should be clear. This is so that difference from the researcher's own position is not used as a basis for criticism and recognition is given to the relationship in the work of others between theoretical basis, research design and research purpose (Hart 1998; BERA 2000). Every effort has been made to follow these good practice guidelines and to summarise the work of others fairly, succinctly and accurately.

Literature Review: Part 1

The place of dyslexia in the essay writing experience

2.1.1 Descriptions of difficulty

The literature suggest that there are links between dyslexia and essay writing difficulty. Difficulties are described as 'organisation composition, handwriting, punctuation and redrafting' (Singleton 1999:129). Singleton (1999:119) also describe areas likely to present difficulty as 'legibility of handwriting, speed of writing, omission of words, research skills, determining relevant content, structuring written material, correct interpretation of task, accurate copying, proof reading, types of spelling error'. Price and Skinner (2007:178) suggest students are likely to need support in 'management of the whole writing process, organisation of various components of the writing process, where to get required information, keeping to deadlines, drafting, editing and proof-reading'. Difficulties therefore are described at word level, with the mechanics of punctuation and spelling; in higher level processes such as structure and organisation; and with contextual features such as content and task requirements.

These kinds of descriptions have been criticised for their reliance on experience rather than research (Hatcher, Snowling, & Griffiths 2002). This could be said to signify the dominance of particular research perspectives over practitioner and student based descriptions (Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001). Nevertheless, the origins of descriptions are not always explicit. The descriptions are therefore explored further in terms of their contribution to understanding the essay writing experience of HE students identified as dyslexic. I explore, firstly, whether definitions of dyslexia are helpful; secondly, what research into essay writing and dyslexia can tell us; thirdly, how essay writing can be related to different causal theories of dyslexia; and finally, the role of a constructionist position.

2.1.2 Definitions and causal framework

The discussion of definitions in the Introduction suggests their limitation for making stable connections between dyslexia and essay writing (see Appendix 1 for examples). They are underpinned by different theoretical perspectives, have different purposes and present different conceptualisations of dyslexia. I therefore do not attempt to formulate a precise definition as a basis for this study. Instead, I see the literature review as an opportunity to establish a broad conception of dyslexia that is appropriate for my own personal position and for the study.

Many of the concepts within the definitions are encompassed by the seminal causal framework proposed by Frith (1999), which, she suggests, lends itself to a perception of dyslexia as a syndrome. It is based on three levels, where cognitive systems act as a bridge between brain and behaviour. Cultural and environmental factors interact at all levels. At the biological level, genetic predisposition and/or environmental conditions explain individual differences in brain function. At the cognitive level, a single component or several might be affected, and the resulting literacy problems also depend on the nature of the writing system and the effectiveness of teaching. There may be characteristic patterns of behaviour, but these change according to factors such as age, ability, motivation, personality and social circumstances (Frith 1999). Individual differences occur as a result of varying risk and protective factors at all levels of the framework (Frith 1999). Cultural factors such as language and writing system can aggravate or mitigate how literacy difficulty is manifest. The relationship between these levels is described as 'probabilistic' rather than 'deterministic' (Frith 1997:6).

The framework foregrounds phonological difficulty as an explanation of dyslexia, suggesting that it is specific, universal and persistent into adulthood (Frith 1997). However, the multi-level framework allows for other causes such as visual, motor and timing problems and the co-occurrence of other specific learning difficulties (Frith 1999). Frith (1997:13) suggests that a number of

problems may occur in the same biological structure during development and there may be 'correlated dysfunctions in other parts of the brain'.

On this basis, dyslexia can be conceived as a syndrome, showing individual variation brought about by genetic, cognitive, cultural and environmental interactions. This conception appears to have scope for understanding variation in essay writing, but the connections lack detail. The following section looks at how research into dyslexia and essay writing has suggested possible connections.

2.1.3 Research into the essay writing of students identified as dyslexic

There is comparatively little research into dyslexia and the essay writing of HE students identified as dyslexic (Farmer, Riddick, & Sterling 2002; Gregg, Coleman, & Lindstrom 2008). Gregg et al. (2008) suggest that more work is needed on the underlying reasons for difficulties. The purpose of this section therefore is to review research into essay writing and dyslexia or work that is pertinent to it and to consider its usefulness to this study in terms of purpose, methods and findings.

Farmer, Riddick and Sterling (2002), in order to establish an appropriate way of assessing the writing difficulties of students identified as dyslexic, compared the free writing, proofreading and speed of handwriting of dyslexic and control groups. Significant differences were found in handwriting copying speed (but not in number of words in essays), in the percentage of words of more than three syllables, percentage of spelling errors, some aspects of grammar and success at identifying errors. The study also compared handwritten and word-processed sections of the essays. They found no differences on any of the dimensions between the two formats in either group.

Hatcher, Snowling and Griffiths (2002) compared the cognitive skills of a sample of dyslexic university students and their non-dyslexic peers. They used this data to inform their investigation

into the study problems of dyslexic students in one university and to establish the most sensitive tests for identifying dyslexia in this setting. The dyslexic students, in spite of comparable verbal and non-verbal cognitive ability, performed less well on tests of literacy, phonological processing and speed of processing. They also performed less well in speed of handwriting (copying), proofreading and a timed précis. In the proofreading task, the dyslexic group were slower and found fewer errors than the control group. In the précis task, their scores were lower for time to read the passage, time to write the précis and for content, structure and legibility.

Both studies also attempt to capture affective and motivational dimensions, Farmer et al. (2002) through a survey requiring Likert scale responses and Hatcher et al. (2002) by using Brown Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) scales. On the ADD scales, the dyslexic group showed the largest effect in affect, attention and effort. Both studies showed heightened anxiety about writing in the dyslexic groups. They also conducted interviews in which students in both studies expressed concerns about structuring writing and being able to write in ways that reflected their understanding. This same concern was found in a study by Mortimore and Crozier (2006).

The purpose in both studies required differences between dyslexic and non-dyslexic students to be identified. Control group comparisons were therefore made using quantitative data and the writing tasks were controlled in terms of setting, time and topic. Tools for exploring more affective factors revealed trends rather than individual profiles. Whilst these methods may have been appropriate for the purpose, they are less so for a study of coursework that aims to incorporate the effects of context. One problem is that the different writing dimensions (e.g. structure, grammar, vocabulary) needed to be comparable and measurable between groups and it could be argued that this led to their being over-simplified and lacking context. The term 'structure' seems particularly problematic. Farmer et al. (2002) attempt to examine the organisation of ideas and the quality of argument, but they acknowledge the limitations of the small sample, impressionistic ratings and the writing setting and suggest the need for agreed

criteria. Hatcher et al. (2002:126) report that the marking schedule for structure included 'marks for the succinct use of words and phrases'. This seems limited in its conception of structure.

Grammar and vocabulary pose similar problems of definition. The terms are not defined by Hatcher et al. (2002) but addressed in detail by Farmer et al. (2002). In grammar for example, they found differences between groups at the word level (errors in word endings or omission) but not in disordered sequencing of clauses, nor in incomplete sentences, in verb tense, nor in noun/pronoun or subject/verb reference. They found differences in vocabulary use in terms of the number of syllables in words and use of colloquialisms. However, in their discussion of language issues, they raise concerns more pertinent to the context such as the literacy background of the participants and strength of identity with the context. This implies more far-reaching conceptions of grammar and vocabulary in the academic setting, for which terms such as style and register and identity become important (Halliday 1994). Overall, it suggests a difficulty with taking adequate account of the contextual effects on writing. This is supported by the fact that discussion in both papers included contextual elements such as differences in course requirements and different coping strategies.

A US study places more emphasis on functional language use in context in an analysis of linguistic features used by college writers in expository writing (Gregg, Coleman, Stennet, & Davis 2002). In a study designed to evaluate the discourse complexity of writers with and without disabilities, Greg et al. (2002) identify the co-occurrence of lexical and syntactic features in the expository texts of four groups in a 30 minute essay writing task. One group is identified with learning disabilities (LD), the second with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), the third with combined LD and ADHD, and the fourth with no disability. A key point in this study is that errors were corrected so that only discourse complexity was analysed. Using a recognised model, they identified four linguistic factors that contributed to the discourse complexity of their expository texts. They then calculated how these factors loaded onto the dimensions of verbosity (number of words), quality

(content/organisation, style, sentence structure, conventions, following the criteria and scoring rubric of the high school writing proficiency examination) and lexical complexity (calculated by the percentage of different word forms or types in relation to the number of different words). In all of these dimensions, raters found significantly different loadings between the groups with disabilities and the fourth group without; the group with combined effects of LD and ADHD were the most compromised. They emphasise the difference in quality ratings even after errors have been corrected.

A further study (Gregg, Coleman, Davis, & Chalk 2007) examines the implications of dyslexia for writing performance in essays assessed for US postsecondary entry. In a 30 minute essay writing task, they examined the influence of handwritten, typed and typed/edited essay formats on the marks received by 65 dyslexic and 65 non-dyslexic students. They were assessed according to quality; verbosity and lexical complexity; spelling and handwriting; and the same quality criteria as in the previous study were applied. Measurements of vocabulary complexity, verbosity, spelling and handwriting accounted for more variance in quality scores in the dyslexic group than in controls. They discuss the importance to writing of fluent access to spelling patterns and vocabulary and how word knowledge relies on the 'reciprocal relationships with topic knowledge, oral language, and reading comprehension abilities' (Gregg et al. 2007:313). It is also of note that differences in quality scores were apparent even in the typed/edited versions of the essays. They suggest therefore that spelling and handwriting alone cannot explain variation in quality. Of interest in these studies is the perception that there is a relationship between the effects of dyslexia and the linguistic and syntactic processes associated with particular types of text. There is discussion of whether there is 'an additive effect' (Gregg et al. 2007:314), that difficulty in recalling spelling and syntactic patterns impacts on cohesion between sentences and hence overall coherence of a text.

Two further US studies situate the problems differently. These explore how the cognitive processes underlying spelling and handwriting have an effect on composing. In the first study

(Berninger et al. 2008b), a randomised control design was used to explore the effects of orthographic versus morphological spelling interventions and the effects when the different spelling approaches were taught alongside written composition. Both groups received phonological interventions. In order also to assess whether writing instruction was influenced by age, both 'treatments' were carried out with different age groups. In the second part of the same study, Berninger et al. (2008b) used a randomised control design to explore differences between explicit language work on spelling (phonological working memory and phoneme – grapheme correspondence) and report writing compared with an intervention that involved non-verbal activities only (virtual reality (VR) science problem solving). This was on the basis that VR has been shown to enhance attention, presence and engagement with task and previous research had suggested that attention training had influenced improvement in composition. In the first part of the study, it was found that, regardless of spelling conditions, transcription and composition skills improved when taught in integrated lessons. The composition skills, of the older age group improved more than those of the younger, suggesting the possibility of developmental delay. In the second part, both explicit language instruction and science problem-solving improved composition.

A second study (Berninger, Nielson, Abbott, Wijsman, & Raskind 2008a) explored the patterns of relationships between handwriting, spelling and composing to see whether they are the same in dyslexic children and adults as in typically developing writers. Their participant groups were drawn from an on-going longitudinal genetics study and consisted of 122 children, 115 fathers and 85 mothers. In contrast to typically developing writers, they found that spelling rather than automatic letter writing contributed uniquely to the written composition of children and adults with dyslexia. They raise the possibility that there may be an orthographic loop in working memory which connects grapho-motor planning with word form. They also suggest that automaticity is involved in automatic letter naming and writing, which in turn has an influence on spelling in children and adults. This requires the inhibition of what is

irrelevant and fluent access to verbal information in long-term memory.

Three further studies conclude differently on where difficulties are situated. In the first (Connelly, Campbell, MacLean, & Barnes 2006), differences in quality between dyslexic university writers and controls were attributed mainly to spelling and handwriting fluency and it was concluded that higher order writing skills are not affected by dyslexia. In the second, (Sterling, Farmer, Riddick, Morgan, & Matthews 1998) in a study with 16 adult dyslexic university students and 16 controls significant differences were found in output; number of spelling errors, including number of phonologically based errors; number of words of three syllables or more, but no differences in sentence length or accuracy of sentence boundaries. These studies therefore focus on lower level writing problems as the basis of difficulty. In contrast, in a study with 100 dyslexic university students and controls, in a précis exercise written in Dutch, (Tops, Callens, & Van Cauwenberghe 2013) differences were found between dyslexic writers and controls in spelling and punctuation but also in quality assessments when errors were removed. Quality was judged according to conciseness, structure, agreeability, vocabulary and sentence structure. No significant difference was found in the quality of handwriting.

In these studies, findings differ on whether difficulties occur only with spelling and handwriting and not with higher level writing processes, whether spelling and handwriting difficulties load onto higher level processes or whether dyslexia related problems with higher level processes occur independently. As suggested previously, it is possible that the methods, while suitable for purpose, do not allow the full picture to emerge. The essays are timed, which may replicate examination but not coursework conditions; the topic is set and does not demand the knowledge-making depth of the students' own subject areas; and the setting is both devoid of context and unlikely to motivate effort or persistence in the same way as assessed tasks.

The problem with the definition and measurement of some writing dimensions is again apparent and definitions sometimes contain assumptions. For example, lexical complexity is measured by number of words, number of syllables in words, number of types of words. This assumes that longer words and more words are likely to lead to higher quality texts; similarly with longer sentences or more subordinate clauses. However, research into text comprehension and discourse processing (Kintsch 1994; Oakhill 1994) suggests that it is the clear signalling of the relationships between words and sentence parts that allows readers to make connections, not necessarily length and quantity. Similarly, theories of cohesion suggest that repeating the same or synonymous word creates lexical cohesion (Halliday 1994). Experience further suggests that for some dyslexic writers the problem is too many words and over long sentences used in an attempt to say what they mean. The methods therefore do not capture the full dimensions of word and sentence use.

A study by Price (2006) goes further towards addressing the lack of context and, in a case study of real-world coursework essay writing behaviours, she adopts a qualitative methodology with university student writers identified as dyslexic. The purpose of the study is to explore the ways in which students use technology to address their dyslexia-related difficulties. The data included reading and spelling performance; writing speed; semi-structured interviews, a writing log, which involved real time audio recording of writing activities during writing, hard copy of draft assignment work, hard copy of final assignment, marks/grades received. A working memory definition of dyslexia was operationalised, i.e. that dyslexia-related working memory limitations undermine the simultaneous processes necessary for writing at HE level and that low-level writing operations need to be automatic in order that resources for essay structuring are not diminished. The study succeeds in capturing a range of essay writing processes, drawing on writing process models (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1987; Hayes & Flower 1980). It also captures the student voice, the differently creative ways with which the students address their writing problems and the individual nature of their difficulties. However, though information

is given about the subject areas and the very different writing tasks, the possible effects of these are not discussed. Also, the study is framed within a conception of dyslexia as a cognitive deficit and this is disputed by some (Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001; Singleton 1999).

A further study that includes qualitative methods takes the perspective of exploring authorial identity and approaches to learning and writing. Kinder and Elander (2011) use a Student Authorship Questionnaire (SAQ) to explore confidence in writing, understanding authorship, knowledge to avoid plagiarism and approaches to writing (top-down, bottom-up, pragmatic). They also use an Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST) to explore deep, surface or pragmatic approaches to learning. They are interested in possible correlations between the findings in each of these tools and whether correlations might differ between dyslexic and control groups. They also conduct semi-structured interviews with six dyslexic students with the highest and lowest SAQ scores. Findings suggest that sense of authorship is lower in students identified as dyslexic and that approaches to learning and writing were less congruent. In the interviews, all felt that dyslexia made writing more difficult, but there was no difference in high or low SAQ scores in whether they thought dyslexia increased the risk of plagiarism. Their findings were different from a Canadian study (Kirby, Silvestri, Allingham, Parrila, & La Fave 2008) which found that university students with dyslexia were more likely to report a deep approach to learning. Their study, however, referred to reading.

The focus on authorial identity is of interest here. They use a definition by Pittam, Elander, Lusher, Fox and Payne (2009:154): 'the sense a writer has of themselves and the textual identity they construct in their writing' (discussed further in Part 2). However, the discussion centres on its relationship to plagiarism. Also, the use of tools such as SAQ and ASSIST might identify broad trends and serve their purpose to develop approaches to academic writing of benefit to this group as a whole, but they are not appropriate for

the interest in this study to understand how individual difference is constituted.

In summary, the reported studies usefully identify areas of difference between dyslexic and non-dyslexic writers and make links with known characteristics of dyslexia. However, control group methodology risks influencing definitions of different writing dimensions such as structure and grammar and controlled writing conditions seemed limited in achieving an in-depth understanding of essay writing in context. It seems that the individuality of approaches and difficulties and the effects of contextual factors are lost. The qualitative study by Price (2006) was more effective in this regard, but seemed not to account fully for differences in contextual writing requirements. The conception of dyslexia as a within person deficit is also questionable. Price makes clear that a working memory definition of dyslexia informs the study. Others refer indirectly to different theories of dyslexia, including phonological difficulties, fluency and automaticity. In the following section therefore, this is taken further, in order to explore how different theories of dyslexia might inform understandings of essay writing for this group.

2.1.4 Relating essay writing to theories of dyslexia

In this section, different causal theories of dyslexia were explored for their capacity to explain essay writing difficulty in student writers identified as dyslexic. During this analysis, two problem areas were highlighted: the tendency to focus on dyslexia as a reading difficulty only and a research focus on children rather than adults. In a study of adults and writing, therefore, it is important to address these issues before beginning a more detailed look at causal theories.

(i) The focus on reading

Research into dyslexia has been criticised because of its emphasis on reading (Berninger et al. 2008b; Gregg et al. 2008; Singleton

1999). This is problematic for understanding of writing, particularly the higher level processes involved in paragraph and sentence composition, where dyslexia research is sparse. Because of this lack, some extrapolation from reading to writing seems to be necessary. However, because reading is an important part of the essay writing process, it makes sense to begin by understanding how reading difficulty might occur at university level.

It is recognised that reading remains problematic for many HE students identified as dyslexic (Grant 2009; Singleton 1999) and there is evidence that decoding accuracy, speed and comprehension can all be compromised (Hatcher et al. 2002; Simmons & Singleton 2000). It is also recognised that phonological difficulties continue into adulthood (Everatt 1997; Gottardo, Siegel, & Stanovich 1997; Hatcher et al. 2002; Shaywitz & Shaywitz 2005). Word reading is not always affected as good word knowledge and the effective take-up of semantic cues (Hatcher & Snowling 2002; Shaywitz & Shaywitz 2005) can mitigate the effects of decoding difficulty.

This suggests that there are likely to be varying patterns of change throughout development. One study compares factors affecting reading development in a longitudinal study with children at high family risk of dyslexia (Snowling, Gallagher, & Frith 2003). The authors found that those classified as normal readers at age 8 still showed impairments in verbal short term memory and phonological awareness, suggesting that the genetic risk is continuous. Risk factors for actual impairment included slow vocabulary development, poor expressive language and grammatical skills. They also suggest that the unimpaired group may compensate for phonological problems by reliance on orthographic and semantic pathways. Because compensation may be costly, problems with spelling may occur. A follow-up study into young adolescents by Snowling, Muter and Carroll (2007:617) investigated environmental factors. This suggests a 'gene-environment correlation'. They found only a weak relationship between parent and child literacy levels, but that the poor readers spent less time reading than average

readers. They suggest that the continuous genetic risk can be modified in different ways.

It is less clear whether or how comprehension problems are explained by dyslexia, (McLoughlin, Leather, & Stringer 2002; Simmons & Singleton 2000; Singleton 1999) and there is some dispute about the relationship between single word reading and comprehension (Bruck 1992). Simmons and Singleton (2000) in a study comparing the comprehension of an academically demanding text amongst dyslexic university students and controls found differences in answering questions that required inferential, but not literal responses. From this they suggest that word level reading must be accurate, and, though no difference in speed was found, they suggest that the dyslexic group may make more reference to the text in order to answer questions.

A study by Snowling, Bishop and Stothard (2000) suggests an interaction between comprehension and decoding and shows the effects of reading experience and changes in vocabulary and text complexity over time. They compared reading development amongst children with dyslexia and specific language impairment (SLI) from pre-school to age 15. The dyslexic group with childhood phonological difficulties and good language skills were able to compensate for early decoding difficulty by age 15. The SLI group with early syntactic and comprehension problems, but no de-coding difficulties, deteriorated in word recognition by the age of 15.

There appears to be little discussion of how these kinds of understanding about reading might apply to writing. It is less problematic at the single word level, where the processes of decoding and encoding are more obviously related (Snowling 2000). Based on the studies discussed, it seems possible that those with a genetic pre-disposition and with limited exposure to print may have less firmly established vocabulary and sentence prediction skills at their disposal. It would be expected that this would affect writing composition. This may be exacerbated further by spelling uncertainty. It could be argued that just as single word decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling) are 'two sides of the

same coin', reading comprehension and writing composition involve similarly related processes and just as spelling is likely to be more effortful than word reading, so composition may be more effortful than comprehension (McCutchen 2000). The processes possibly involved are discussed further in relation to dyslexia theories (section (iii) of this chapter).

(ii) Dyslexia and adults

Based on the studies above, dyslexia can be viewed, not as an 'all-or-none-condition', but as 'multi-componential' involving 'differential impairment of different language processes' which might be modified by different environmental conditions (Snowling, Gallagher, & Frith 2003:369). It is important therefore to understand how this picture might relate to adults. Some comparisons are made between children and adults (e.g. Berninger et al. 2008a; Shaywitz & Shaywitz 2005) and this foregrounds a number of points important for understanding dyslexia in adults. It is agreed that phonological difficulties continue into adulthood (Bruck 1990; Bruck 1992; Hatcher et al. 2002) and difficulties have been shown to remain stable across different languages at university level (Lindgren & Laine 2011). It seems also that a difficulty apparent at one stage of development may change or alleviate over time and changes may also occur in cognitive architecture (Daniels 2008; Ransby & Swanson 2003; Simmons & Singleton 2000) or at brain level (Shaywitz & Shaywitz 2005), though not enough is known about the extent of neural plasticity (Grigorenko 2008). It seems therefore that no assumptions can be made about the presence or severity of patterns of difficulty, purely based upon a positive assessment of dyslexia.

The assertion that some characteristics of dyslexia change over time raises questions about the meaning of the term compensation. This might be seen as changes in cognitive and neurological architecture over time, as discussed above. In a different way, Fawcett and Nicolson (2004) use the term conscious compensation, which suggests persistent need for extra effort to achieve 'normal' performance. It is the requirement for conscious effort that causes

Herrington and Hunter-Carsch (2001) to question the idea of compensation. With reference to adults, McLoughlin et al. (1994) discuss different levels of compensation as strongly related to awareness. Compensation is described as 'an adjustment process by which the impact of internal and external limits are minimised through relying on other means' (McLoughlin et al. 2002:34). It is important therefore to be aware that student writers may be at a point of change and to understand the different dimensions of the term 'compensated'.

(iii) The relevance of causal theories

Whilst there is little discussion of the relationship between theories of dyslexia and writing, particularly higher level writing processes, it is possible to make some connections. To avoid lengthy descriptive accounts, key theories have been summarised and are presented in table 2.2. The table is intended to provide a reference point where needed. Whilst the relative merits of different theories are debated in the field, the purpose here is not to enter into these debates, but to consider how different theoretical perspectives might contribute to understanding the essay writing difficulties of those identified as dyslexic.

Summary of Dyslexia Theories
<p>Phonological processing:</p> <p>The most empirically tested and widely accepted theory. Difficulty mapping individual speech sounds (phonemes) onto corresponding orthographic representation (graphemes) (Hatcher & Snowling 2002). Also affected: verbal short term memory and encoding verbal information in long term memory. (Shaywitz & Shaywitz 2005; Snowling 2000).</p> <p>Double deficit hypothesis:</p> <p>Difficulty with reading fluency (Wolf, Bowers, & Biddle 2000; Wolf & O'Brien 2001). Fluency is the automatic combining of phonological, orthographic, morphosyntactic and semantic systems (Wolf et al. 2000). Associated with naming speed difficulty (Wolf & O'Brien 2001). Seen as problem with timing within and between 'a complex ensemble of attentional, perceptual, conceptual, memory, phonological, semantic and motoric sub-processes' (Wolf et al. 2000:395).</p> <p>Visual processing: Seen as difficulty in accessing/remembering orthographic representation of letters in a word (Everatt 2002). Related to research into sub types of dyslexia: those having difficulty with reading non-words and those having difficulty reading exception words i.e. lexical or sub-lexical dyslexics (Castles & Coltheart 1993). Small numbers of 'pure' forms of one or the other. Most show mixed patterns of phonological processing difficulties with a few showing exception word reading difficulty only (Hanley 1997). Snowling (2001) argues that differences are accounted for by more or less severe phonological problems. Visual strengths can compensate for phonological difficulties. Recent suggestion that rapid orienting of visual attention interferes with phonological processing (Ruffino et al. 2010).</p> <p>Visual sensitivity: Known as Meares Irlen syndrome. Effects include light intolerance, movement/distortion of letters, sore eyes (Evans 2002). Remedied by coloured overlays or tinted spectacles (Wilkins 2003, but see Henderson, Tsogka, & Snowling 2013).</p>

Visual attention: Difference between selective and sustained attention. Selective: can focus on one or more items and resist distraction. Sustained: persistence in focus (Evans 2002). Problems can cause unstable eye movements or over-sensitivity to global features of text. Related to magnocellular theory and Meares Irlen syndrome.

Automaticity: Difficulty in achieving automatic stage of learning in cognitive and motor areas (Nicolson & Fawcett 2001). Studies showed impairment in balance under dual task conditions. Concerned with the role of the cerebellum in language to co-ordinate the activities of the different brain regions involved in reading, writing and spelling (Fawcett & Nicolson 2008).

Magnocellular theory: Abnormal functioning of magnocellular pathways in visual and auditory systems. Causes difficulty controlling rapid change, both in eye movements during reading and in perceiving change in frequency and amplitude of sound. Implications for phonological and orthographic word representations. Concerned with the temporal processing of sensorimotor information. Also related to visual distortion (Stein 2001).

Working memory theories: Dyslexia defined as an 'inefficiency in working memory' (McLoughlin et al. 2002:19). Four sub-components (Baddeley 2007): phonological loop, visual-spatial sketchpad, central executive and episodic buffer. Phonological loop described as including a phonological store and an articulatory rehearsal mechanism, which allows the memory trace to be refreshed by overtly or covertly vocalised rehearsal. The visual spatial sketchpad deals with visual and spatial information. The central executive is concerned with the control of the processing capacity of the other two sub-systems, but the more recent model focuses on attentional control rather than storage capacity. Some of the capacity role is taken up by the episodic buffer, which acts as an interface between the other three systems and long term memory (Baddeley 2007).

Table 2.2: Summary of causal theories

As suggested by Frith (1999) theories overlap and cannot be treated as separate entities. The following headings therefore do not replicate those in table 2.2, but acknowledge these links and overlaps. Different theoretical concepts are re-visited in turn to explore how they might contribute to explanations of essay writing difficulty.

The role of the phonological loop and working memory in essay writing

McLoughlin et al. (2002) argue that working memory inefficiencies explain primary dyslexic difficulties, allow anticipation of future difficulty and help understanding of why particular strategies are successful. However, there are debates about precisely how problems occur. One view is that problems are centred in the phonological loop (see table 2.2 for description) and have a 'bottlenecking' effect (Swanson & Siegel 2001), which puts pressure on the central executive. The phonological theory of dyslexia (table 2.2) would predict this kind of disruption (Hulme & Snowling 2009) and could also contribute to understanding of writing difficulty. Problems in the phonological loop could result in difficulty with spelling (encoding of phonemes to graphemes), word retrieval and verbal short term memory (Snowling 2000). It is suggested that dyslexic individuals code verbal information into

memory according to its semantic rather than phonological features, making simultaneous retrieval of meaning and phonemic representation inefficient (Miles & Miles 1993; Snowling 2000). Verbal short term memory difficulties can be associated with verbal rehearsal during reading or writing and breakdown could result in comprehension or composition problems (Swanson & Siegel 2001). In this way, it can be argued that the phonological loop alone can account for some writing problems.

An alternative argument is that working memory operates across all domains and accounts for reading and writing difficulty independently of the phonological loop (Jeffries & Everatt 2004; Smith-Spark & Fisk 2007; Swanson & Sachse-Lee 2001; Swanson & Siegel 2001). Swanson and Siegel (2001) suggest that central executive systems are impaired, including monitoring activities linked to sustained attention. Jeffries and Everatt (2004) also find evidence that separates different working memory sub-systems amongst children identified as dyslexic and those with other SpLDs. Ransby and Swanson (2003), in a study with young adults with childhood diagnoses of dyslexia, further found that working memory operated independently not only of single word reading but of reading as a whole. A further possibility is that processing patterns change over time. Swanson and Siegel (2001:35) conclude:

The importance of the executive and phonological system in predicting reading performance may be related to age. As children age, the executive system may play more of a primary role in separating good and poor readers than at younger ages.

Those supporting the role of the phonological loop alone however consider that central executive difficulties can be explained by the co-occurrence of other SpLDs such as SLI or ADHD (Hulme & Snowling 2009; Snowling 2008).

Much of this evidence relies on extrapolation from reading and there is only a small amount of research in the dyslexia literature that focuses on the role of working memory in writing. Skellariou and Price (2010) study the contribution of the different components

of working memory to the written composition of secondary school students with and without dyslexia. They conclude that differences in central executive functioning alone influence the structural complexity of the writing, but limitations in vocabulary also interact with central executive functioning. Swanson and Berninger (1996) explore the effects of individual differences in working memory on writing skill and conclude that only working memory measures of central executive processing appeared to predict writing skill, but that transcription (handwriting and spelling) was predicted by short term memory. Berninger (1999) further suggests that transcription and working memory contribute significant variance to the composition of developing writers, with the role of transcription decreasing over time as skills become automatic. This allows the possibility that where transcription is less automatic, fewer resources remain for composition.

Some insights can be gained by exploring differences between skilled and unskilled writers at different stages of development. This is not to equate dyslexic writers with unskilled writers, but the relationship between language generation and composition is relevant. McCutchen (2000), in a study including adults, suggests that effective language generation allows more capacity for knowledge generation via long term working memory. Graham and Harris (2000) also argue that writing competence depends on high levels of self-regulation, which increase as transcription skills develop.

The literature on writing is more fruitful for understanding the role of working memory in different parts of the writing process (Kellogg 1996; McCutchen 2000; Vanderberg & Swanson 2007). This line of thinking is influenced by the seminal work of Hayes and Flower (1980;1983) on cognitive models of the writing process and subsequent adaptations by Hayes (1996;2012). According to this model, writing is controlled by planning (idea generating, organising and goal setting), and ideas are translated into text, with planning/re-planning and reviewing operating recursively throughout. These processes interact with the task environment (topic, audience and text written so far) and are resourced by

writers' long term memory, working memory, reading and attention. A key outcome of this kind of research is that writing is not linear, but recursive, that planning and revising can continue throughout the whole writing process (Hayes & Flower 1980).

Chenoweth and Hayes (2003) investigated the relationship between working memory and sub-vocal articulatory rehearsal during writing. They found that this inner voice played an important role in translating ideas into language and when verbal memory for rehearsal was impaired (by the requirement to repeat while writing the word *tap* in time to a metronome) writing was significantly slowed down. They showed that writers produce shorter writing bursts when working memory is restricted and they gave evidence that attributed this to the translation rather than the idea generating process. This has clear implications for dyslexic writers whose verbal short term memory is inefficient. Daiute (1984:210) also adds understanding to the relationship between sentence composing processes and performance resources. She suggests that writers store many different complex sentence structures in long term memory and these then guide the production of new sentences. She suggests that: 'Depending on the relative stability of sentence-structure patterns, writers are affected differently by the limits of short-term memory capacity' (Daiute 1984:210).

Kellog (1996:59) describes writing as the 'simultaneous activation of formulation, execution and monitoring'. Kellog (1996:63) finds that, during planning, the central executive and the visual-spatial sketchpad are involved in drawing on visual imagery, deciding on tone, trying out organisational schemes and 'thinking through what one is trying to say'. The phonological loop is involved in translating ideas into text, including the 'inner voice' that is involved in selecting the phonological representation of words, devising a syntactic framework and storing it in the short-term loop: 'Subvocal articulation of these representations prolongs their availability for covert editing'. Again the implications for dyslexic writers are clear.

Vanderberg and Swanson (2007:748) conclude that when studies separate writing into different processes (e.g. vocabulary, syntax,

punctuation) the components of working memory are captured, but when all the processes of writing operate simultaneously 'more cognitive drain is placed on the central executive's ability to manage all the writing skills'.

Phonological and working memory difficulties therefore contribute significantly to understanding of writing composition problems, particularly when dyslexia related issues are juxtaposed with evidence in the literature on writing.

The role of fluency, speed and automaticity

Wolf and O'Brien (2001:134) argue that definitions of fluency should identify all of the systems that underlie fluent reading. They identify these as:

Lower level attention and visual perception; orthographic (letter-pattern) representation and identification; auditory perception; phonological representation and phoneme awareness; short term and long term memory; lexical access and retrieval; semantic representation; decoding and word identification; morpho-syntactic and prosodic knowledge; and finally connected-text knowledge and comprehension.

The effective speed, timing and integration of all of these processes, and automaticity in some, generate fluency (Wolf & O'Brien 2001). In general, reference is made to reading only, but this breakdown shows common ground with the processes that underlie writing composition and emphasise the importance of speed, timing and integration (see Berninger 1999; Berninger et al. 2008a). Gregg, Coleman and Lindstrom (2008:325) define fluency in writing as 'the ability to produce words or larger language units in a limited time interval', though they suggest that not enough is known about underpinning processes.

The concept of automaticity is clearly important in writing, but whereas Wolf and O'Brien (2001:124) describe the neurology of their theory as 'a parallel processing act' between cortical, sub-cortical and cerebellar brain areas, Fawcett and Nicolson (2001) explain their automaticity theory as centred on problems in the cerebellum. Research reviewed by Nicolson and Fawcett (2004)

shows anomalies in the structures of the cerebellum and its under-activation during phonological tasks. It is suggested that the cerebellum modulates language processes and may have an effect on lexical retrieval, syntax and language dynamics. Furthermore, it is also suggested that it may have a role in 'inner speech' (Fawcett & Nicolson 2008) and in the procedural memory system that is involved in 'the learning of new rule-based procedures that govern the regularities of language' (Nicolson & Fawcett 2008:205). Research has not explored the role of the cerebellum in relation to higher level writing processes, but of interest are the role of inner speech and the discussion of possible cerebellar involvement in higher level learning systems.

Cerebellar involvement in motor processes raises the issue of whether to address the fine motor skill of handwriting. This is discussed in a number of the writing studies in relation to speed, automaticity and its effects on spelling (Berninger et al. 2008a; Farmer et al. 2002; Hatcher et al. 2002). Berninger's work with handwriting mainly involves children. Studies with students (Farmer et al. 2002) involve tests of writing speed to assess the effects of writing under exam conditions. However, in a study involving coursework, it can be assumed that writers have a choice of format, usually until the final word-processed version. It was decided therefore not to address in detail the literature on handwriting. It is nevertheless recognised that requirements for speed and legibility can be a drain on cognitive resources even with adult university students and this is relevant to note making in essays. This is an area rarely discussed, though Berninger (1999) suggests that note-making allows writers to coordinate text in progress with information in short term memory, with information retrieved from long term memory and with new ideas.

The role of the magnocellular theory and visual processing

Discussion of impaired temporal processing of visual and auditory information at a perceptual level is difficult to associate with essay writing. However, though research is applied to reading only, Stein (2008:56) considers that the 'neurological syndrome' involving temporal processing can account not only for phonological

difficulties but also 'visuomotor, speech, short-term memory, attentional coordination and general sequencing problems'. It is not precisely clear how these might apply to different levels of writing, but the effects on reading are clearly important as part of the essay writing process, not least in the reviewing of text as it is produced. An area not widely discussed is the cause of differing ability to notice 'minor' errors such as spelling, word endings, word omission or punctuation errors (Farmer et al. 2002; Hatcher et al. 2002). It is possible that difficulty with processing the visual detail of words and with maintaining attention might affect the ability to notice these kinds of errors.

These issues clearly overlap with other visual processing difficulties (table 2.2). It is suggested that Meares Irlen syndrome affects 12% of the general population and 65% of those are identified as dyslexic (Evans 2002). Recent research has questioned the use of coloured overlays as remediation for visual distortions, suggesting that, whilst reading rate might improve, improvement did not extend to the reading and comprehension of connected text (Henderson, Tsogka, & Snowling 2013). Stein (2008) acknowledges that all those identified as dyslexic may not experience magnocellular dysfunction. In practice, it is apparent that not all experience visual difficulty, but those who do describe reading as frustrating, fatiguing and uncomfortable. If this occurs alongside decoding problems it is likely to have a major impact on the essay writing process as a whole.

In summary, it seems that links can be made to theories of dyslexia that go some way towards explaining the essay writing difficulties of students identified as dyslexic. The discussion amply illustrates Frith's point (1999) that theories are not either/or choices, but are subsumed within each other at different levels. The question remains, however, whether there is a common core problem with add-on ameliorating or aggravating features, whether there are sub-types of dyslexia or whether co-occurring difficulties are present. If the study aims to understand more about differences in essay writing amongst this group, it is important to

explore the likelihood of sub-types and perceptions of co-occurring SpLDs.

(iv) Sub-types and co-occurring SpLDs

There is some agreement that there is heterogeneity in the behavioural manifestations and cognitive profiles of dyslexia, particularly in adults (Grant 2009; Singleton 1999). However, there is also debate about whether these differences are located in specific or general domains (Grigorenko 2008). The first suggestion of subtypes proposed differences between 'phonological' and 'surface' dyslexia arising from comparisons in reading non-words and exception words (Castles & Coltheart 1993). Questions were raised concerning selection of participant groups and over-reliance on dual-route (separate phonological, orthographic and semantic routes to word recognition) rather than connectionist models (interacting routes leading to word recognition) of reading (Manis, Seidenberg, Doi, McBride-Chang, & Petersen 1996).

Subsequent research has further questioned these sub-types. Zbell and Everatt (2002) found that differences in irregular word and non-word reading tasks did not separate a group of dyslexic adults in measures of phonological ability and other cognitive measures. Manis and Bailey (2008:171) in a longitudinal study identify a relatively stable 'core subgroup with selective phonological deficits' along with others who have varying difficulties that are 'difficult to characterise'. Snowling (2008:153), in a study including those at family risk of dyslexia, suggests that risk and protective factors interact during development, resulting in different literacy outcomes. She argues that dyslexia should be viewed as a 'continuously distributed dimension'.

Subtypes are also denoted by the different theories of dyslexia. Subtypes are suggested as phonological only, naming speed only, or the double deficit, with the latter being suggested as most resistant to intervention (O'Brien, Wolf, & Lovett 2012; Wolf & O'Brien 2001). Further subtypes are suggested as consisting of those with cerebellar difficulties, those with magnocellular

difficulties and those with both (Fawcett & Nicolson 2008). However, a case study of 16 dyslexic university students (Ramus et al. 2003) evaluated phonological, magnocellular and cerebellar theories with a view to exploring whether they were three overlapping subtypes or whether there was a single theory with other manifestations as additional markers. Findings from a comprehensive assessment of cognitive and linguistic areas supported a core phonological theory with some experiencing additional sensory and motor disorders. In a similar study to test the separability of phonological, visual magnocellular and cerebellar theories (Reid, Szczerbinski, Iskierka-Kasperek, & Hansen 2007), no single theory could account for the variation in the 15 cases studied. They leave open whether this suggests sub-types with varying combinations, or a core phonological problem with co-occurring markers.

Some researchers tend towards perceiving these additional difficulties as possible co-occurring SpLDs such as SLI or ADHD. Blakemore and Frith (2005), controversially they say, suggest that the infant brain may have different start-up mechanisms, one or more of which might fail, thus creating one or more developmental problems. Research again seems divided on whether to seek specific cognitive and neurological identifiers for different learning difficulties, or whether to consider that patterns of activity in brain structures and networks may lead to a variety of cognitive and behavioural outcomes, given different environmental conditions and developmental trajectories (Gilger & Kaplan 2008; Hulme & Snowling 2009).

One line of research has been to focus on anomalies in specific brain structures. Paulesu et al. (2001) found the same reduced activity in left hemisphere brain areas in speakers of English, French and Italian, in spite of different orthographies and different behavioural reading manifestations. However, problems in one area might have a domino effect causing disruption in other areas (Blakemore & Frith 2005) and it can be difficult to determine the direction of causality (Galaburda 1999). Rice and Brooks (2004:31) also suggest that we do not know enough about the brain's

plasticity to understand how far atypical brain functioning is 'an adaptive response to atypical experience'. There is some evidence of compensatory systems and neural plasticity occurring with age and after intervention (Gabrieli 2009; Shaywitz & Shaywitz 2005). Hulme and Snowling (2009:342) suggest it is preferable to consider how 'different dimensions of impairment correlate with each other' rather than focus on 'categorical diagnoses'. They argue that research should focus on the interacting dimensions that cause delays to typical development, but they justify the use of categorical labels for 'the extremes of continuously distributed differences' (Hulme & Snowling 2009:24).

Gilger and Kaplan (2008:57) conceptualise learning disabilities as Atypical Brain Development (ABD). They consider this to be a unifying concept that can describe 'developmental variation of the brain and subsequent brain-based skills on either side of the real or hypothetical norm'. They consider that a different approach is needed firstly because overlapping difficulties are so frequently found that categories risk being artificial and not consistently defined; secondly, they suggest that genes indicating susceptibility to reading problems might act alone or together and result in a variety of reading profiles; thirdly, brain areas, circuits or systems that bring risk of learning disability do not operate in isolation from other brain areas. They suggest that their conceptualisation allows for changes over the lifespan and analysis of giftedness as well as difficulty.

An example of this more unified approach is seen in the suggestion by Wolf and Kaplan (2008:236) that greater understanding is needed of an 'academic regulatory system'. This involves neuroanatomical studies of connections between cognitive and limbic areas to understand more about how cognitive, motivational and emotional states interact with each other.

Pollak (2009) supports the concept of neurodiversity as a broad term, though neurotypical is then implied. Grant (2009) suggests that neurocognitive profiles are always complex and complexity can be masked by labels. He suggests it is essential that strengths and

weaknesses in the profile can be mapped onto people's everyday experience. From the perspective of practitioners working in a student centred support setting, it is possible to discuss strengths and weaknesses with students, alongside assessment information, and be aware of different dyslexic profiles and the possibility of other overlapping SpLDs (Herrington 2001). The usefulness of labelling can also be discussed on an individual basis.

It seems therefore that this study is more usefully informed by a dimensional approach and notions of neurodiversity and ABD than by a focus on mapping the person onto one or more labels. This is particularly true where risk and protective factors such as early language experience, developmental stage and formal teaching interact with initial difficulties (Riddick 2010; Snowling 2008). However, it is acknowledged that some students find labels helpful and for the purposes of funding applications they are a necessity (Gilger & Kaplan 2008; Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001; Pollak 2005).

In conclusion to this section, theories of dyslexia were surveyed and evaluated for their contribution to understanding of essay writing difficulty and some explanations could be suggested. The discussion of dyslexia in adults, of sub-types and of co-occurring difficulties suggests a view of dyslexia as interacting differently with previous experience and learning contexts at different points in development to determine different outcomes. Hulme and Snowling (2009) suggest that research is only just beginning to address the detail of environmental interactions. Whilst the links between theories of dyslexia and essay writing difficulty are possible and go some way towards understanding the difficulties experienced by student essay writers identified as dyslexic, they do not fully address my fundamental question of how such wide-ranging differences occur in the prevalence and severity of difficulty in the essay writing experience and essay texts of this group.

Whilst some work has been done to explore environmental interactions in reading development (e.g. Snowling 2008), the demands of writing an essay in a particular context have not been

explored in relation to dyslexia. It is relevant therefore to examine not only the context of academic writing but also of dyslexia. Social interactive models of dyslexia give the role of context greater priority, suggesting that the concept of dyslexia is constructed by the social context (Cooper 2009; Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001). In the following section I explore this further.

2.1.5 Dyslexia in context

Students arrive at university with different experiences of learning, whether or not their dyslexia has been identified, and if already identified, with different experiences of 'being dyslexic'. They enter a new learning context where they will meet both different individual reactions to dyslexia alongside nationally and institutionally defined responses to it. It is important therefore in a study that intends to explore a specific study area (essay writing in HE), to discuss the implications of context to understandings of dyslexia.

The importance of environmental factors has been suggested in the discussion so far, for example in Frith's model (1999); in essay writing research that acknowledges the importance of course requirements (Farmer et al. 2002; Hatcher et al. 2002); and in cognitive and neurological studies that trace changes across the life-span (Shaywitz & Shaywitz 2005; Snowling, Bishop, & Stothard 2000). These perspectives tend to retain a view of dyslexia as a 'within-person' problem, usually a deficit in relation to expected norms (Chanock 2007; Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001; Pollak 2005). However, an alternative perspective is that dyslexia occurs within social and cultural practices which themselves construct conceptions of dyslexia equally as powerful as dominant cognitive paradigms (Macdonald 2009; Reid & Valle 2004; Riddick 2010). This position is clearly important for this study, which is interested in situating a view of dyslexia within a social practice approach to writing and in understanding how different experiences of writing are constituted for those identified as dyslexic. There are a number of ways that this kind of approach to dyslexia can be addressed. For convenience, I divide them firstly into those that consider the

role of affective factors such as self-esteem, self-efficacy and concerns with stress and anxiety and secondly those that take a more constructionist approach.

(i) The role of affective factors

One way of introducing wider dimensions of dyslexia has been to discuss the emotional effects and its relationship to stress (Goodwin 1996; Miles 2004; Singleton 1999). A study that attempts to capture the dyslexic person's point of view (Gibson & Kendall 2010) suggests that there is a culture of institutional disablism, which encourages feelings of failure and lack of self-esteem to transfer from school to university. In a qualitative study with five dyslexic learners the authors identify the negative effects on self-esteem of being placed in a low set; this led to being offered unstimulating learning materials and restricted subject choices at GCSE. Relationships with peers also had a negative effect. Important as it is to identify these effects, it is possible that studies such as these give scope only for expression of negative experience.

The potential for a more balanced context-oriented approach is one that identifies risk and protective factors during development. Riddick (2010), for example, includes amongst these the point of identification and quality of intervention, school experience, severity of literacy difficulties, nature of support from parents, teachers and peers and academic achievement. She also suggests that these contribute to self-esteem, self-efficacy, coping strategies, attribution style and anxiety levels.

University students identified as dyslexic have been found to have lower self-esteem and higher anxiety than control groups (Riddick, Sterling, Farmer, & Morgan 1999). A study by Carroll and Iles (2006) differentiated between state anxiety (associated with a particular task) and trait anxiety (generalised anxiety beyond a specific context) and found that students in their study displayed both academic and social anxiety compared with controls.

However, questions are raised about the concepts of self-esteem and self-concept for a number of reasons: they tend to be used

interchangeably (Burden 2008); they change over time according to individual, social and educational circumstances (Burden 2005; McNulty 2003); and research methodologies are queried because of confusion over definition and suggestions that conclusions about the relationship between self-esteem and dyslexia are presented as causal rather than correlational (Burden 2008; Riddick 2010). Burden (2008) argues that measures of self-esteem do not explain why an activity engenders a particular response. He prefers to emphasise what he sees as a more constructionist perspective (Burden 2005), applying the concepts of self-efficacy and attribution style. He suggests that more emphasis should be given to the cultural factors that influence the sense of control over competence in carrying out a task. This includes factors that influence how the value of a task is perceived and how success or failure in a task is explained to the self (locus of control) (Burden 2005). His and Riddick's position is that these are influenced by interaction between the self and cultural conditions.

Herrington and Hunter-Carsch (2001:114) take this a step further in their suggestion that

'it is the specific values which are attached to particular standards and concepts of literacy and numeracy which largely shape the way in which dyslexia is perceived and experienced.'

The idea that the experience of dyslexia is shaped by cultural factors therefore needs further exploration.

(ii) A constructionist approach

From this perspective, students' experience of dyslexia can be viewed as being constructed by the discourses that the context makes available (Hall 1997). Surrounding discourses govern the way that a concept, in this case dyslexia, is talked about and how ideas about it are put into practice (Hall 1997). This way of thinking about dyslexia is more in concordance with my own position and with ways of thinking about writing that are discussed in Part 2 of the literature review.

Gee (1999:19) defines a Discourse as:

..... a "dance" that exists in the abstract as a co-ordinated pattern of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, objects, times and places andas a performance that is recognisable as just such a co-ordination. Like a dance the performance here and now is never the same. It all comes down, often, to what the "masters of the dance" will allow to be recognised or will be forced to recognise as a possible instantiation of the dance.

In these terms, it can be seen how students draw on available cultural resources and how patterns develop that construct their way of 'being dyslexic' (Roberts et al. 2009).

However, identities that students can take on as dyslexic are not completely determined by surrounding discourses; students have to locate themselves in a position that makes most sense and how they negotiate a position is influenced by current and previous experience. In this way they also have a role in constructing available discourses (Hall 1997; Reid & Valle 2004). Gergen (1994, in Wetherell, Taylor & Yates 2001:249) conceptualises self-identity as reliant on cultural resources. He considers that we create self-narratives from relevant events over time and attach meanings that give them coherence. Cultural resources serve the social purposes of 'self-identification, self-justification, self-criticism and social solidification'. We attempt to maintain consistency, but events can cause changes of direction and we provide justification for these. Narratives are also created in dialogue with others. This seems to describe the picture of how students, especially those identified at university, have to negotiate and re-negotiate 'being dyslexic' during their time at university. Support tutors, for some, are part of this dialogue of negotiation (Herrington 2001).

Pollak (2005:112) identifies four discourses of dyslexia adopted by students: those taking on a deficit or disability discourse, those isolating their dyslexia to their university life, which he terms a 'student' discourse, those focusing on differences in brain hemispheres and those who see it as a political struggle, whom he calls 'campaigners'. Pollak acknowledges that it is more complex than it might appear. In my experience, such categories only begin

to capture the diversity and subtlety of the narratives of dyslexia that students grapple with and discuss during the support process. In the following discussion, I consider possible discourses of dyslexia that the HE context makes available within which students identified as dyslexic have to negotiate a position as learners and writers.

(iii) Possible discourses of dyslexia in HE

Disabled or not?

As discussed in the Introduction, it is argued that the processes of assessment and access to Disabled Students Allowances (DSA) reflect deficit medical models of dyslexia (Pollak 2005). Students are required to provide evidence that they fit the category of being disabled (Roberts et al. 2009): a student 'must undergo construction as a disabled person in order to be recognised as a person of ability' (Chanock 2007:A-40). The legal framework surrounding disability then opens up a 'rights discourse' (Chanock 2007:A-37) and entitles students to negotiate optimum conditions for study. Students might then become 'campaigners' (Pollak 2005), victims, pragmatic, sometimes reluctant, users of the system in order to obtain necessary arrangements, or they may reject the label and hence entitlement to funding and examination arrangements.

Roberts et al. (2009) found that none of the students in their study constructed their positions as disabled informed by social or medical models of disability. This is understandable when faced with a process of providing evidence that becomes cumulatively 'de-voiced and decentred' (Mehan 1996). It is owned less and less by the individuals concerned. Texts from one setting are used to generate texts in the next sequence of events (Mehan 1996). In HE, educational psychologists' assessments are quoted in needs assessments. Both have their own discourses, one to support professional practice and meet requirements for DSA application laid down by the SpLD Working Group (2005) and the other to meet requirements for transparency and accountability for Student Finance England (SFE). The students have these discourses

imposed upon them and have to work out how they wish or are able to respond (Roberts et al. 2009). This raises important issues of power over whose voices are heard (Riddick 2010). Mehan's case study (1996) shows how the role and professional language of educational psychologists held sway over student, teacher and mother and how this missed important understandings of the student's position. Herrington and Hunter-Carsch (2001) argue that too little attention is paid to adults' vivid descriptions of their own processes.

Different? - but how different?

An alternative to the deficit model is one of difference (Singleton 1999). This can imply difference from a hypothetical norm (Gilger & Kaplan 2008) or what is usually expected (Frith 1999) or a point along a continuum of difference that applies to the whole population (Cooper 2006). This has implications for pedagogies of inclusion or exclusion and of relevance here are the conflicting messages this presents to students. Campaigners have worked hard to establish difference (Riddick 2010) and organisations such as the Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (ADSHE) emphasise the specialist nature of the work with students identified as dyslexic (see ADSHE Guidelines 2009). On the other hand, the inclusive approach encouraged by disability legislation aims to treat difference as the norm (Adams & Brown 2006; Hurst 2009). For the student then, this becomes a further point of identity negotiation, whether to take on an internal sense of difference, to accept it for pragmatic reasons or to see their dyslexia as blending within the range of individual difference.

Am I supposed to be gifted?

A further concept associated with dyslexia by some is that of giftedness (West 1997). This is usually presented as a characteristic learning style, involving enhanced creativity and visual spatial thinking (Morgan & Klein 2000). It is an important concept in this study as it is also cited as a reason for essay writing difficulty, based on a perceived mismatch between a 'dyslexic thinking style' and a linear sequential style associated with essay writing (Cooper 2009; Pollak 2005).

The evidence for characteristic learning style strengths is mixed and is usefully reviewed by Mortimore (2008). She concludes that evidence tends to be anecdotal and too much based on now questionable work on hemispheric specialisation. This also follows Goswami's listing of neuromyths (2004:10) in which she cites hemispheric specialisation, hence the dominance of right brain thinking in dyslexia, as a 'lay belief'. Further studies found little evidence that visual spatial talents were constitutional in origin or associated with right hemisphere dominance (Everatt, Steffert, & Smythe 1999; Steffert 1999). In a study comparing cognitive style profiles of 60 male dyslexic university students and controls, Mortimore (2006) found no significant difference in style. Cooper (2006) suggests that learning style should be embedded more firmly within task-associated meaning making in specific contexts. He found that dyslexic adults appeared as a higher proportion than controls at both extremes of a continuum between visual and verbal learning.

The Coffield report on learning style (Coffield, Moseley, Hall, & Ecclestone 2004), in its criticism of measurement tools, has to some extent further undermined the concept. However, this does not discount the importance of self-awareness about learning strengths and weaknesses (Cooper 2006; Mortimore 2008). In accordance with Mortimore (2008), experience suggests that some dyslexic learners do indeed show unusual and creative patterns of thinking, but, on the available evidence, care is needed not to over-generalise the association in order not to disempower those who do not experience learning in this way.

Intelligent or stupid?

Associations between dyslexia and intelligence also have to be negotiated and are particularly sensitive in the HE context (Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001). Students encounter a number of portrayals of themselves as intelligent or not as they move through the systems of dyslexia assessment, grapple with their academic work and discuss appropriate reasonable adjustments and strategies with support staff. IQ as a measure of underlying ability continues to hover over the process of dyslexia assessment,

even though the importance of discrepancy between measurement of IQ and reading and spelling has now been largely discredited (Siegel & Smythe 2008; Stanovich 1994; BPS 1999). The SpLD Working Group (2005) justifies the measurement of underlying verbal and non-verbal ability as important for predicting effectiveness in developing compensatory strategies and informing intervention. It is further suggested that the overall cognitive profile is important (Grant 2009; Turner 1997) and that achievement of high scores in some areas can have a positive effect on those who have had their lack of ability emphasised by teachers (Turner 1997).

It is often in follow-up discussion of dyslexia assessments that concern about conceptions of intelligence emerge and students take subtly different positions. These range from an assumption of stupidity, puzzlement with their sense of struggle, frustration at 'being as clever as others' but not being able to demonstrate it and confidence in their ability. Support staff often engage in discussion about concepts of intelligence: that there are fundamental criticisms of IQ measures, that they neither measure potential nor predict performance (Cooper 2000; Pavey, Meehan, & Waugh 2010). Also, the outcome is affected by culture and by the learning difficulties that that tests set out to isolate (Siegel & Smythe 2008). It seems therefore that a view of intelligence is needed that is more than the outcome of 'a specific test at a specific time under specific circumstances' (Burden 2002:276).

Gardner's multiple intelligences (1993) have influenced the move away from a unitary concept, but, according to Reid (2009), educational systems prioritise verbal-linguistic intelligence over Gardner's other concepts. This leads to limitations in the effects on understanding the needs and strengths of learners identified as dyslexic (Reid 2009). Burden (2002) suggests that more focus should be placed on meaning making in context. He suggests that this would lead to a more meaningful identification of problem areas and an assumption of improvement through mediated intervention. The idea of mediated intervention could be said to be crucial to the support process also.

Literate or illiterate?

Recognised continuing difficulties with reading and writing in the student population identified as dyslexic (Hatcher et al. 2002) can position these students as struggling to meet university level literacy requirements. In an environment where ability is demonstrated through reading and writing, this is a threat to their identity. However, the situation for students is more complex than standardised test results suggest. Feelings about reading and writing often emerge during screening and in discussion of achievement test results in dyslexia assessments. Results may affirm known difficulties, but also they may not reflect their experience, which might be as effective readers and spellers in spite of difficulty identified in standardised tests.

As discussed in the Introduction, there is a tendency in the field of dyslexia research to view literacy as transparent, with little discussion of alternatives (but see Healy Eames 2002; Wearmouth, Soler, & Reid 2003). However, a critical literacy stance emphasises the role of culture in defining the values, beliefs and power relations that create the dominant literacy environment (Healy Eames 2002; Lillis 2006; Street 1984). From this perspective, the difficulty is in dealing with the literacy practices defined by the school system (Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001; Wearmouth et al. 2003). The dyslexic student's position is then one of requiring access to culturally defined texts (rather than being inherently unable to read them) before they can then engage with the ideas on the same footing as their peers. Strategies promoting this in the school setting are suggested by Hunt (2002). In the university setting, the provision of extra time, technology and supportive strategies go some way towards meeting this need. More explicit discussion of how texts are culturally defined, as part of the support process (Herrington 2001) and in the wider disciplinary context (Lillis 2006), would also assist students to negotiate a more positive position.

The discussion cannot claim to have included all possible discourses and positions open for negotiation: a continuing surprise for experienced practitioners is the continued emergence of 'new' situations. However, it serves to illustrate how students identified

as dyslexic, particularly those newly identified while at university, have to negotiate a position as a dyslexic student amidst multiple sometimes conflicting institutional discourses and also absorb into their understanding the more tacit meanings of 'being dyslexic' in HE. It can be said that socio-cultural conceptualisations of self-efficacy and attribution and culturally defined self-narratives contribute to understanding the diversity and richness in the identities of this group. When this combines with culturally defined discourses of writing, a complex picture emerges.

2.1.6 Conclusion to Part 1

No single theory or definition of dyslexia could be said to account for the essay writing difficulties described in the literature or identified in the research. Working memory theories seemed to hold explanatory value for writing problems in this group, but phonological difficulties were also key. Speed, fluency and automaticity similarly were part of the picture. All explanations were hampered by the sparsity of research into relationships between higher level writing processes and dyslexia. However, it was found that parallel research into working memory in the writing literature strengthens the argument for working memory problems as an explanation of difficulty.

Also arising from the exploration of causal theories was evidence for interacting environmental factors, which may change cognitive and neurological functioning at different points in development and in different cultural contexts. This is particularly relevant for understandings of dyslexia in adults and in HE. However, much of this research retains a deficit medical model of dyslexia and seems limited in its capacity to explain the full diversity of individual dyslexic experience.

Alongside these understandings I suggest that a constructionist interpretation shows how students have to locate themselves amongst the multiple discourses of dyslexia and of literacy in the HE context in interaction with their previous patterns of experience and approaches to learning. This has possibilities for explaining the

many different manifestations of dyslexia and of writing performance in this context. What is not clear is whether we should think of dyslexia as a set of core difficulties that become expressed in numerous social ways; or whether the intricately woven combinations within the syndrome and the environmental and cultural influences upon them become so entangled that we should rather think of dyslexia as a fluid, socially constructed concept with some shared characteristics, but which displays endlessly different forms of expression.

Still further questions arise if this picture of dyslexia is seen within the context of academic writing. Discourses of dyslexia do not exist in isolation: they are embedded within the practices of academic writing, amongst others. To understand differences in writing experience and performance therefore, we need to explore these writing practices further. However, in a focus on the social practices of writing and of dyslexia, there is a danger of losing sight of the compelling connections between dyslexia-related cognitive difficulties and the cognitive processes of writing. With this in mind, in Part 2 of the Literature Review I investigate the practices of essay writing from an academic literacies perspective. I also consider other perspectives on writing that might be important to understanding the impact of dyslexia. Finally, I bring together the two fields of study to discuss how a theoretically consistent approach can be established.

Literature Review: Part 2

Essay writing as social practice: The picture beyond dyslexia

As discussed in the main Introduction, thinking about essay writing in HE increasingly leans towards an academic literacies approach. The focus in Part 2 therefore is to consider the avenues of understanding opened up by this approach. In this way, I embed academic writing within a theoretical framework that opens up different dimensions of writing. This lays a foundation for understanding the essay writing experience of those identified as dyslexic that is more broadly-based than one focusing only on dyslexia. I consider the implications of this for the experience of student writers and for analysing essay texts, both of which are part of this study. As previously discussed, I also briefly consider other relevant perspectives on writing.

2.2.1 An academic literacies approach to essay writing: theoretical basis

An academic literacies approach to writing draws on a number of social theories listed by Gee (2000) as marking a 'social turn' away from behaviourism and cognitivism. This immediately marks it differently from predominantly cognitive connections made between dyslexia and writing. It has its roots in a literacy movement known as 'New Literacy Studies' (Gee 2012; Lea & Street 2006). A key concept in this movement is Street's distinction between autonomous and ideological models of literacy (Street 2003; 1984). Proponents of 'New Literacy Studies' reject the autonomous model as associated with schooling, the assumption that literacy is acquired in a neutral environment and will in itself enhance cognitive development. The ideological model sees literacy as always embedded within social practices. Language is not the direct transfer of meaning into words via the cognitive processes of the individual. Language both constructs and is constructed by different conceptions of knowledge, identity and social relations (Street

2003). Conceptions always derive from a particular world view and have the power to dominate and marginalise (Street 2003).

The concept of academic literacies gained status as a theoretical approach to writing in HE based on the seminal work by Lea and Street (1998) and in the following discussion I draw extensively on their work. They argue that student writing can be viewed in three ways, a study skills model, an academic socialisation model and an academic literacies model. The first sees writing as a cognitive skill in dealing with features of language, such as grammar and correct sentence structure. Academic socialisation involves the acculturation of students into the ways of their disciplines. This model recognises the connections between disciplines and their associated genres and knowledge making practices (Lea & Street 2006). An academic literacies model does not discount the relevance of the other two, but considers academic socialisation to be an inadequate conception of academic writing (Lea & Street 2006). They suggest that the kinds of social relations and identities that are possible are defined by the practices of the surrounding discourses. These practices are implicit and variable, but become treated as the norm. Proponents therefore seek to make explicit the tacit and contested nature of social relations, identity and knowledge making practices in different disciplinary and institutional settings. Student writing is viewed as 'sites of discourse and power' (Lea & Street 1998:159). Researchers are interested in how language is 'recruited' to do social work (Lankshear 1999:222).

An academic literacies approach owes some allegiance to the work of Foucault (Hyland 2009). In Part 1 of the review, I discuss how different experiences of 'being dyslexic' are constructed by surrounding discourses of dyslexia. In doing so, I apply to dyslexia a theoretical stance that is also associated with writing, one in which the choices writers can make are enabled or constrained by surrounding discourses (Hyland 2009). This strikes a different chord from predominantly cognitive explanations of writing behaviour in the dyslexia field. However, this does not mean that writers' choices are entirely predetermined; they have some agency

in the decisions they make, though this is applied in slightly different ways by different researchers.

From a Foucaultian perspective, individual acts of doing, speaking and writing construct discourses and change them over time (Gee 2012; Hall 1997). As discussed in Part 1, writers select from their available cultural and linguistic resources to create patterns of behaviour designed to justify, blame, persuade, explain etc. (Gergen 1994). They can therefore be stakeholders in how they present themselves (Burr 2003).

Ivanic (1998) applies Vygotskian precepts to explanations of individual agency: writers reach a particular intramental state, which determines what they can write; this is a fluid state, which changes according to life experiences and values. This intramental state can derive only from intermental experience in the social world. These ideas are important to Ivanic's work on writing identity, which is discussed further in due course.

Scott (1999:181), in work that is directly relevant to the agency of student writers, questions the idea of writers as the puppet of external forces and considers that essay writing involves individual meaning-making and creativity. She believes in the 'transformative action' of the subject whom she sees as presenting 'motivated signs'. Each time writers produce text, they use their resources, (knowledge, understanding and experience) to create an individual experience, which is still socially made. Reading students' essays therefore should be an 'imaginative attempt to identify what each student is doing and where it might come from'.

In contrast to a view of writing as emerging from the cognitive processes of the individual mind, and in the case of dyslexia from inefficient cognitive processes, an academic literacies approach recognises notions of 'others', both metaphorical and literal, that enable or constrain the decisions writers can make. Gregg, Coleman and Lindstrom (2008) are amongst the few in the field of dyslexia to raise issues such as awareness of audience and reader, which they discuss in terms of social cognition. Researchers in the

field of academic literacies take a much wider view of these external influences and frequently draw on the work of Bakhtin. According to Bakhtin (1981:342), there is a state of tension between what he terms 'authoritative discourse' and 'internally persuasive discourse'. We encounter authoritative discourse 'with its authority already fused to it', for example in official or legal documents. We accept it as it stands. Internally persuasive discourse occurs 'when thought begins to work in an independent, experimenting and discriminating way' (:345), but it is still 'half ours and half someone else's' (:345). Utterances are further influenced by their being directed to someone or their addressivity (Bakhtin 1986:95). The composition and the style of an utterance 'depend on those to whom the utterance is addressed, how the speaker (or writer) senses and imagines his addressees'. This varies according to role, for example as subordinate or superior, familiar or unfamiliar or an 'unconcretised other'.

Researchers also draw on the work of Fairclough (1992; 2003) and his notions of intertextuality. Fairclough (1992) differentiates between manifest intertextuality and interdiscursivity. Manifest intertextuality refers to parts of a text that can be traced to another source, when another text is quoted, paraphrased or referred to directly. Interdiscursivity describes how one text makes reference to another because they are shared text types. In academic writing therefore, this incorporates the requirement to refer to authoritative others in the field and also draw on particular ways of writing and using language that are shared by others in the discipline. Explanations of dyslexia-related difficulty with language do not take these kinds of requirements into account.

The decisions and dilemmas involved in language use are further influenced by discourse communities and interpretations of the term discourse. In Part 1, reference is made to the definition of Discourse by Gee (1999). To elaborate further, Gee (1999:7) distinguishes between 'little d' and 'big D' discourse. At the level of 'little d' discourse, interest is focused on how language is used to enact particular activities and identities of a community; but 'little d' discourse is closely interwoven with non-language events that

cause activities and identities to be enacted in particular ways (big 'D' discourse). Shared language use therefore becomes part of a community identity and writers are constrained by the discourse communities of which they are a part or indeed from which they might feel excluded.

Swales (1990:25-27) identifies six defining features of a discourse community: it has an agreed set of common public goals; mechanisms for intercommunication among its members; participatory mechanisms to provide information and feedback; access to one or more genres by which to further its aims; a specific lexis and a threshold level of members with suitable degrees of expertise. Learning to be members of a discourse community equates with a socialisation model of student writing (Lea & Street 1998), so from an academic literacies perspective the idea of discourse community is contested. This is partly because the concept of community is not stable (Hyland 2009) and there are many different conceptions of it (Becher & Trowler 2001).

An academic literacies approach takes a more critical stance and aims to make visible how ways of using language become part of the routine practices of particular social groups and institutions. These practices construct social roles and relationships and ways of creating knowledge that are specific to those groups, but they become treated as the norm (Lillis 2001). This idea of community has the effect of including some and excluding others, and the beliefs and values become taken for granted as ideology (Fairclough 2003). The discourses of dominant groups therefore both manage and reproduce the kinds of values and beliefs that are possible (Van Dijk 1997).

This critical element, and for some overtly political (see Fairclough & Wodak 1997), is a key part of an academic literacies perspective. Lillis (2001:40) sees 'essayist literacy' as ordained institutionally. She bases this on Gee's view of academic language (Gee 2004), though he refers to all educational settings. He describes academic language as maintaining a view of 'higher intelligence' that is 'epitomised by explicitness (i.e. low reliance on context), analytic

skills, logical (deductive) thought, abstract definitions and generalisations, and sustained attention to or communication on a single topic' (Gee 2004:91). The problem according to Lillis (2001) and Turner (1999:154) is that there is a 'discourse of transparency'. This is associated with a view of language as the transparent transmission of meaning and a view of academic thinking as the objective, logical representation of knowledge. There is therefore a tension between how language is viewed in the academy and the actual ways in which language is constructed by and constructs discourse practices. According to Lillis (2001), these tensions have an effect on students' understandings of what is expected and can disadvantage some, in particular 'non-traditional' students.

As already suggested, the field of dyslexia leans towards a view of language as autonomous rather than ideological (Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001). This raises the question of how to approach analysis of language from a social practice perspective. An academic literacies approach to language often draws on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (Hyland 2002). According to Halliday and Hasan (1989) texts exist in their immediate living environment, which they term 'context of situation'. They also contain elements of the cultural histories of the participants, which they term 'context of culture'. Halliday saw a relationship between the context of situation, context of culture and the functional organisation of language (Halliday 1994). Texts simultaneously weave together more than one kind of meaning (Eggins & Martin 1997). Ideational meanings map the reality of the world – it is what the text is about; interpersonal meanings say something about the writer's attitudes to the topic, the role he/she takes on, such as questioning or expressing certainty and attitudes to the reader; textual meanings show how the text is organised, that it is an event coherent with social expectations (Eggins & Martin 1997). Once language is viewed as socially constructed, therefore, understanding of language difficulty becomes multi-layered and complex.

In Part 1, connections between theories of dyslexia and writing difficulty were suggested. The different ways of 'being dyslexic' constructed by the context further widened the picture of how the experience of writing might vary. This resumé of theoretical underpinnings of an academic literacies approach suggests still further layers to understanding how student writers make writing decisions and use language. In the following section I look in more detail at how these theoretical approaches impact on essay writing. I frequently draw on the work of Ivanic (1998) and Lillis (2001). Both have theorised an academic literacies approach in detail and worked in depth with HE student writers. Ivanic also analysed essay texts. Their work illustrates the dilemmas and potential disadvantage for writers that are revealed by this view of writing, dilemmas that are equally relevant to writers identified as dyslexic.

2.2.2 Implications for writers and their essay texts

Key points arising from the discussion so far are that:

- What is valued as shared knowledge and valid evidence and the kind of language that is acceptable is constructed by and constructs surrounding discourses (Fairclough 2003). These values are variable and often tacit and exert power over members or aspiring members of discourse communities (Lillis 2001).
- These practices invoke particular kinds of roles and identities that writers are expected to demonstrate in their writing. Roles, or confusion about them, become evident in the choices writers make and the language they use. They may accept, reject or fake the expected role and/or feel powerless in the face of it (Ivanic 1998). The different ways of 'being dyslexic' suggested in Part 1 present additional dimensions to the idea of writing identity.
- 'Others' are present in the decisions writers make about what and how to write (Fairclough 2003). For those identified as dyslexic, 'others' include, not only those present for all writers, but also assessors of dyslexia and DSA needs, support staff,

responses of academic tutors to dyslexia, and institutional and disciplinary systems.

Clearly these three elements are connected, though, for convenience, I discuss each in turn in terms of how they relate to writing essays.

(i) Knowledge-making practices

The variation in knowledge-making practices between disciplines is well recognised. Bazerman (1981:364) finds differences in the lexicon, citation and implicit knowledge, anticipated audience and how the author is represented in essays written by academics in molecular biology, sociology and literary criticism. The different disciplines 'represent three different solutions to the problem of writing knowledge'. However, this does not mean that disciplines are homogenous and can predict text types (Baynham 2000). Baynham describes the disciplinary politics of nursing students who have to write as philosophers, sociologists, scientists and reflective practitioners. Lea and Street (2006) describe work on academic literacy with students from linguistic minority community backgrounds as they move towards HE. They show the benefits of being explicit about the link between cultural practices and different kinds of writing. Also, in-depth interviews with 24 Open University students revealed how writers constructed knowledge differently, as 'reformulation' or 'challenge' (Lea 1999) in their attempts to understand what was expected.

As suggested by Lillis (2001), problems occur because these values are not made explicit. I take up again some of her criteria for 'essayist literacy' discussed above to illustrate the dilemmas this can create for student writers. In particular, I focus on the requirement for explicitness, logical thought and critical analysis.

Explicitness

In spite of expectations of explicitness, a lack of explicitness can be seen in disciplinary-level assumptions about writing and in feedback comments. This might be particularly problematic for students identified as dyslexic, for whom explicitness is said to be important

(Price & Skinner 2007; Reid 2009) and there is some evidence of implicit learning problems in this group (Vicari et al. 2005). Lea and Street (1999:64) analyse the criteria on assessment feedback sheets and documents designed to give guidance on 'how to write'. They also interview tutors and access memos circulated during the drafting of such documents. They show that documents include the requirements for word limit and referencing alongside requests for 'coherent organisation' or 'persuasiveness of argument'. All are treated as transparent instructions, when clearly some are not. Exchanges during the development of memos and interviews show competing institutional, disciplinary and individual practices.

Lillis (2001) explores advice in feedback to 'be explicit' with one of her participants and finds ten possible ways in which explicitness could be applied, but all are couched in the overarching advice to 'be explicit'. Figure 2.2 captures Lillis's conversation with the student about the possible meaning and shows the numerous possible interpretations.

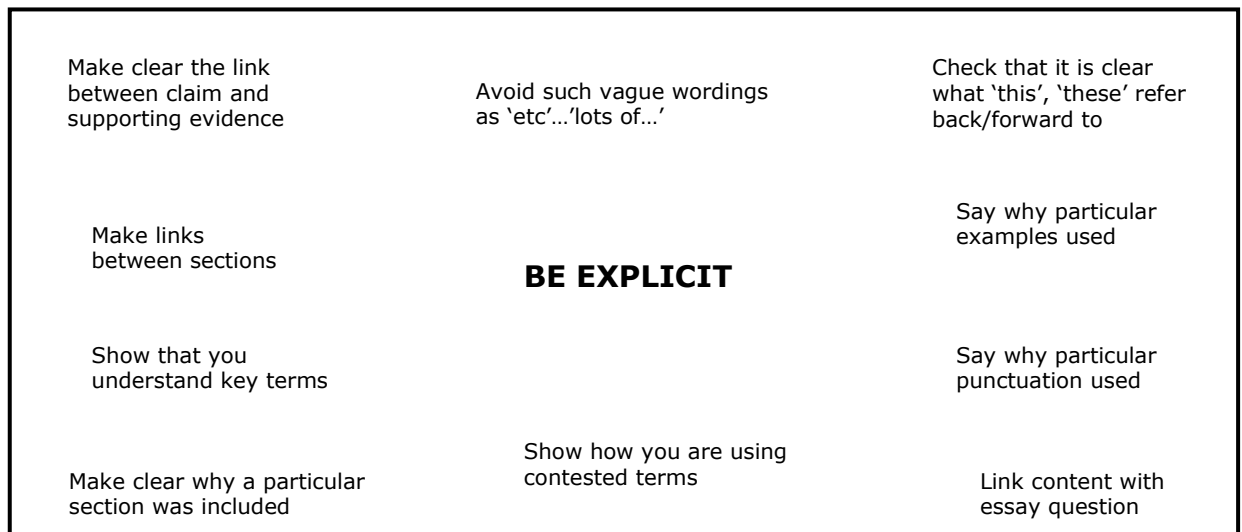


Fig. 2.2: Exploring 'be explicit' with one student-writer (taken from Lillis (2001:57))

Logical thought

The concept of logical thought is epitomised by the common request to students to 'make structure clear', or 'clarify your argument' (Ballard & Clanchy 1988). This is again treated as a transparent concept, though there is evidence that it is not. Lea

and Street (1998) found that academic tutors identified 'clear structure' as important to an essay, but had difficulty in defining what they meant by it.

Ivanic (1998:277) suggests that to develop an argument, writers have to know what needs 'defining, explaining, elaborating or supporting', but this varies in different contexts and decisions are not clear-cut. Also, in developing a coherent argument they have to judge what they can present as 'given' information in relation to what is 'new' and this has then to be presented to a more knowledgeable reader. Ivanic (1998) illustrates how she, as non-anthropologist, 'missed' a crucial connection between claim and evidence and hence the writer's argument appeared to break down. She further demonstrates lexico-syntactic differences in her students' essays between sociology, literary and cultural studies and natural sciences. Ways of writing knowledge are different.

Critical analysis

Similar confusion occurs over the interpretation of 'critical'. This relates to the need to show knowledge of source material and at the same time express an independent view. This is recognised as problematic for student writers (Bartholomae 1985), partly because of disciplinary differences in acceptable ways of achieving it (Creme & Lea 2009). Read, Francis and Robson (2001), in a study with final year History undergraduates, showed how students' decisions about presenting their own voice were dominated by what would be seen as acceptable in a situation where markers were deemed more powerful; they identified a tendency to 'agree' with the marker's view rather than present their own. Groom (2000:66) suggests patterns in the ways that students struggle to present their own voice. Some have a 'solipsistic' voice and are criticised for being anecdotal or lacking evidence. Others express only the views of sources and are criticised for not expressing an opinion. They use referencing conventions in ways that Groom (2000:69) terms 'attributed', 'averred/unaverred' or 'unattributed'. Students who quote the views of others but then fail to give their view are constructing 'unaverred textual voices', but think that they are expressing an opinion.

These three areas give some indication of how the decisions writers can make are affected by the contested nature of knowledge-making practices. Students write in particular ways because of how they understand these practices and these understandings are based on previous and current experience involving varying levels of confidence and affective responses. This variation invokes different writing identities (Ivanic 1998) and we begin to see the difficulty of isolating dyslexia-specific writing problems from this wider picture.

(ii) Identity as a student essay writer

Kress (1989:11) suggests that discourses to which writers have already been exposed build social and linguistic experience and potential 'like sedimentary layers'. Ivanic (1998:328) shows how students bring their autobiographical selves to their writing (their sense of self, their repertoire of 'voices' or discourses and genres, ideas, interests and commitments). They also present a discursive self, but 'have a sense of owning and disowning' aspects of this. Writers are exposed to a variety of discourses and relationships and they creatively combine these 'possibilities for selfhood'. Discursive identities also change over time as part of a process of interaction and with each new act of writing (Burgess & Ivanic 2010). For students in this study therefore, previous and current experience of 'being dyslexic' forms part of those autobiographical and discursive selves, and part of my purpose is to explore those interactions rather than to focus only on dyslexia.

Writers' previous experience may differently predispose them to wish or to be able take on the identities expected by their disciplines. Gee (2012:175) coins the term 'mushfake' to describe the stance of those for whom full fluency in a discourse is not possible or who give an appearance of membership but are not fully committed. He promotes the position of being socially 'maladapted' (Gee 2012:177) as one of heightened awareness and considers that 'mushfaking', coupled with meta-knowledge, is a powerful position to which literacy teaching should aspire. Having dyslexia as part of identity could be said to complicate decisions on the position to

take and this is influenced by perceptions of how the discourse community views dyslexia. Support tutors also have a role in encouraging the meta-knowledge suggested by Gee (2012).

Ivanic (1998:218) describes ways in which her writers 'owned, disowned, rejected or aspired to' particular representations of themselves. She describes one student's determined owning of the content of her essay based on her own experience in spite of emphatic criticism from her tutor that she was questioning a well-established viewpoint without adequate foundation. She felt her tutor's criticism was rejecting her personal experience as irrelevant. Ivanic further illustrates one of her writer's dilemmas over her rejection of a social worker identity in her essay:

...I might not even be interested in social work, but I felt like I had to put that in...in other words playing a role. It's quite easy to play a role and kind of lie....so that's why I felt uncomfortable. (Ivanic 1998:158, quoting one of her student writers)

These different ways of identifying as academic writers are clearly interwoven with how writers can relate to their surrounding discourses and the 'voices' in their heads as they write. Who do they want to be and how does this relate to who they think they are expected to be?

(iii) Social relations

Writers are in dialogue with their readers and with texts to which they have already been exposed; they relate differently to the authors of these texts and the discourses of which they are part. Lillis (2001:45 and 47) shows how students' meaning making is embedded within relationships in the context of situation and the context of culture. From the context of culture, students take the 'voices-as-language' and 'voices-as-experience' that they bring with them to their writing. At the level of context of situation, a tutor sets an essay with particular expectations about the content. The student tries to establish what these are through discussion with the tutor, attending lectures and reading recommended texts and possibly departmental guidelines. The different ways in which

students relate to tutors and understand their expectations is likely therefore to have an effect on the decisions they make. Lillis gives examples of students talking about what they can and cannot say. She discusses why a student has omitted a section in the final draft of her essay:

*N: X[tutor] says you shouldn't say that
T: Why not?
N: He says you don't want to offend anybody
T: So who are you likely to offend?
N: The education officers or the education.....
T: Who's going to read this?
N: Just you and X and the moderator
T: So who are you going to offend?
N: The education system*

Fig. 2.3: Dialogue with Student N (Lillis 2001:82)

Her tutor's advice and institutional values clearly echo in her mind as she writes, and cause her to make particular writing decisions.

Ivanic (1998) shows how students vary in how they represent the views of others, both linguistically and in their stance towards them. She shows students changing the language of source material and rejecting the opinion; using a quote without any comment to support own words and ideas; and assimilating both the language and the ideas. She suggests this indicates different kinds of relations with the surrounding discourses and the different ways in which writers respond to others' voices tells us something about their own. She also shows writers changing the ways they write to give a better impression:

I might be cleverer about it in the future.... And instead of what I said, say, "this is a very complex issue which is not germane to the question" rather than "not to be discussed here".I think the more elegant is something I'm always reaching for...(Ivanic 1998:240, quoting one of her student writers).

This taking on of others' language has implications for understandings of plagiarism. Ivanic (1998:193-4) shows how one of her writers selects a patchwork of extracts copied verbatim, but linked by her own words, which Ivanic feels would amount to

plagiarism. She suggests that this is 'a transitional phase as students struggle to make discourses their own'. The writer's own words show the power of the institutional voices that play in her mind as she writes:

'I don't want anyone to think I'm cheating....I wonder sometimes am I taking too much out of the book? Am I putting too much in my own words? I think "God! When am I going to find a middle ground?"'
(Ivanic 1998:195, quoting one of her writers).

The contested nature of knowledge-making practices, identity and social relations shows how this way of thinking about writing reveals the complexity behind the decisions writers make about what to write. It also opens avenues of exploration for how differences in writing experience might be constructed. It seems that the experience of dyslexia can be interwoven with the dimensions suggested in order to take a broader look at this group of writers.

Part of my original puzzle was how some essays written by students identified as dyslexic offer clearly written expositions of required titles whilst others are problematic, with great variation in the ways that essays do not meet requirements or communication breaks down. In addition to understanding the writers and their thinking as essays evolve, it is also necessary, therefore, to examine the essay texts.

2.2.3 Analysing essay texts

The contested idea of logical thought in academic writing has already been discussed with reference to all writers. This is often translated in essay terms into the concepts of structure and argument. Based on experience and descriptions in the dyslexia literature, structure and argument are a common area of difficulty for those identified as dyslexic, though for these students, difficulty is usually attributed to within-person dyslexic difficulties rather than context. It seems that connections with dyslexia, as discussed in Part 1, are inadequate to explain the numerous and subtle ways in which the structure and argument in texts can break down. This

results in ill-defined descriptions of dyslexic writers as being prone to 'awkwardness of expression' or 'having difficulty organising writing'. On the other hand, the lack of concern with 'errors' from an academic literacies perspective is equally problematic. For the moment, I focus on ways of approaching the terms structure and argument. I discuss how to address errors in writing in the final section of the review.

In analysing text, it is important that writers' experience should be integrated with analysis of their texts, that in focusing on text structure I do not lose sight of the 'imaginative attempt to identify what each student is doing and where it might come from' (Scott 1999:181, as quoted above). My purpose in this section therefore is to explore how analysis of structure and argument can be theorised in a way that is consistent with social practice approaches to writing, but which may explain difficulties found in the writing of students identified as dyslexic.

Ivanic (1998) refers to local and global organisation rather than structure of text, differentiating between overall subject-related argument and the maintaining of coherence over stretches of text of varying length. I make a similar distinction and focus first on the term coherence and then on argument. Understanding of the term coherence is important to my analysis of essay texts, and, as will be discussed in the Methodology, involves analysis of both evolving and final essay texts.

To avoid lengthy explanations within the text, table 2.3 suggests a glossary of the linguistic terms used by quoted authors based on my own understanding.

Linguistic terms	Explanation
Cohesion or cohesive ties	<p>Four ways in which cohesion is created (Halliday 1994):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference: an element in one point in the text is picked up as a reference point later, e.g. using he, her, it, them, their. • Ellipsis: a clause or phrase from one point in the text is presupposed at a later point by omission. Meaning is understood but not actually expressed. • Conjunction: a clause or longer stretch of text can be related to what follows it, i.e. the reader can see the connection between adjacent assertions • Lexical organisation: continuity is created by choice of words. Using the same word or one that is synonymous to express the same idea throughout the text.
Logical relations between assertions or clauses	<p>Clauses might be organised as subordinate to each other, co-ordinate or super-ordinate. Relations such as cause, condition, elaboration need to be clear. Sentences containing multiple subordinate clauses are one of the defining features of academic discourse (Ivanic 1998; Hyland 2009).</p>
Information structure	<p>The flow of information allows the reader to keep track of meaning. This relies on how clauses/assertions are ordered and organised. Halliday (1994) refers to this as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme and Rheme: the theme is the launch pad for the message and usually comes first. It is not necessarily a noun, nor the subject of the sentence. It can also be the topic sentence in a paragraph. See also Lautamatti (in Connor 1987) • Given and new: in terms of the information being communicated, new information is likely to come at the end of a sentence. Given information, often at the start, sets the context according to what has been said previously. See also Vande Koppel(1986) <p>When these go wrong, it is not necessarily grammatically inaccurate, but makes meaning more difficult to maintain.</p>
Nominalisation and nominal groups	<p>Meaning is compacted through the use of noun forms or phrases: e.g. 'having too much to drink' becomes 'excessive alcohol use'. These are further defining features of academic discourse (Hyland 2009).</p>
Mood and modality of verbs	<p>Express levels of certainty, condition, obligation, willingness, possibility etc. This would be the case if.... It seems that..., It is likely that.... This might be the case... These kinds of expressions</p>

	relate to the interpersonal aspect of meaning in Halliday's functional grammar. They indicate the stance of the writer towards their audience and the topic.
lexis	The stock of words in a text. Ivanic calculates lexical density, i.e. number of meaning carrying words in relation to function words (from, which, because). Academic language tends to be lexically dense (Ivanic 1998) See above also 'lexical cohesion'.

Table 2.3: Glossary of linguistic terms

(i) Coherence

Ivanic (1998:277) suggests that coherence across stretches of text is maintained 'by deploying cohesive devices, manipulating given and new information into the best position in clauses and packing information which has already been spelt out in detail earlier into nouns when it is needed later.' She stresses that decisions about what is 'given' and what is 'new' varies according to subject area.

Grabe and Kaplan (1996:70) describe coherence as the 'underlying relations that hold between assertions'. The coherence of text structure helps the reader to construct a mental model of comprehension (Grabe & Kaplan 1996). They define it as follows:

- *having a discourse theme (overall topic of discourse)*
- *comprising a set of relevant assertions relating logically among themselves by means of subordination (cause, condition, comparison, specification), coordination (addition, restatement), and/or superordination, from the level of the sentence to the top-level structuring of a text, and*
- *being organised by information structure imposed on assertions most effectively to guide the reader in understanding the theme or the intent of the author (topic-comment, theme-rheme, given-new, focus-presupposition).*

Fig. 2.4: Definition of coherence (Grabe & Kaplan 1996:71)

Their definition is more linguistically detailed, but incorporates local and global levels of coherence with the inclusion of an overall discourse theme, which for essay writers would equate with their interpretation of the essay title.

From both definitions, it is possible to see how understanding how coherence breaks down could be important to the analysis of problem texts. It is possible to examine clause organisation in terms of whether the relations between clauses are clear and how given and new information and/or theme and rheme is organised. Also, it should be possible to identify if the overall discourse theme is maintained.

In addition, Ivanic (1998) examines whether her writers' texts are coherent with the social setting in terms of particular lexico-syntactic patterns, which she suggests are common to academic discourse. She considers that this indicates her writers' desire to subscribe to the values of their subject areas. She follows Halliday in her analysis of types of verbs; nouns, nominalisation and nominal groups; tense, mood and modality; and lexis (Ivanic 1998:259). She shows how all her writers use these features and aspire to the academic values of their subject areas. However, she emphasises that there are differences in use based on different subject areas. She also shows how they identify with more than one discourse within the same text.

Coherence then also means coherence with socially defined expectations. Halliday (1994) considers that the terms cohesion and coherence describe how texts are semantically organised according to the social context in which they occur. He suggests that these are semantic features rather than part of clause organisation and that it is through cohesion that meaning is channelled into a traceable flow. In terms of academic language, features of cohesion are deployed in ways that express the writer's thinking explicitly enough to show the reader the line of thought and meet the cultural requirements of the text (Myers 1999). Cohesion in UK academic writing tends to be strongly signalled (Grabe & Kaplan 1996). Analysis of cohesive ties may therefore be a further way of analysing reasons for communication difficulty in a text.

The idea of coherence with the social situation of a text also moves towards conceptions of genre and poses the question of whether

identifying markers of the genre of academic essays would be helpful. Halliday (1994) has little to say about longer texts, but he does suggest that coherence with the social situation of a text can be identified. Halliday & Hasan (1989) relate the three language functions already discussed (ideational, interpersonal and textual) to corresponding features of the social situation, the field, tenor and mode of a discourse. Depending on the field, tenor and mode of the surrounding discourse, the elements that must/can occur in a text, their possible positions and how frequently they occur are configured differently (Halliday & Hasan 1989).

On the one hand the concept of genre provides individuals with conventions that allow them to participate in social and rhetorical situations; it also allows the take-up of particular identities and shapes and enables writing in particular ways (Bawarshi 2000). Wingate and Tribble (2012) suggest that a critical approach to genre has been important for teaching in the setting of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). However, Bawarshi (2000) and others caution against being over prescriptive in the relations between text and context (Myers 1999). Genres are not static; the discourse conventions on which they draw are contested and, following Bakhtin and Fairclough's notions of intertextuality, texts draw on multiple genres in their construction (Ivanic 1998). It seems therefore that identifying the presence or absence of genre features as a means of analysis will not be useful. It is also difficult to connect genre with dyslexia-related difficulties.

Overall, it seems possible to draw on definitions of coherence to analyse why communication might break down in a text. This can be done by examining cohesive ties, the relations between clauses, the organisation of given and new information and lexico-syntactic forms commonly found in academic discourse. It seems that this approach to coherence does not separate text from writers and context. The concept of coherence also has potential to pinpoint textual differences between writers more precisely than expressions such as 'awkwardness of expression' and 'lack of clarity', descriptions sometimes applied to the writing of dyslexic students. However, it will not address the issue of actual grammatical errors.

(ii) Argument

I now consider whether my experience of discussing argument with students should be more theoretically formulated as a guide to analysis. Andrews (2010) sees conceptions of argument as moving along a spectrum from a logical structural view to a rhetorical choreographic one. In Toulmin's model (Toulmin 1958 in Mitchell and Riddle 2000), the breakdown of argument into four units of analysis (Claim, the position on which a stand is being made; Grounds, the information on which the claim is based; Warrant, the principles that justify the move from Grounds to Claim; Backing, information that gives authority to the Warrant) provides a consistent structure (Mitchell & Riddle 2000). However its application in educational contexts is considered problematic: it is technically difficult to apply; it tends to be more appropriate for identifying existing arguments than constructing new ones; and it does not capture the dynamic processes of weighing up different sources and exercising scepticism that are expected in student writing (Andrews 2010). Importantly also, it does not capture disciplinary differences (Andrews 2010).

Mitchell and Riddle (2000) adapt Toulmin's model, replacing his terms with SINCE, THEN, BECAUSE. Whilst this allows a more generative model, usable in an educational context, it does not develop the relationship between micro, mezzo and macro levels of argument (Andrews 2010). For this, Andrews (2010:47) suggests a structure based on Vygotsky's theory of concept development, from 'heaps' to 'complexes' to 'concepts'. Andrews represents this development graphically in relation to argument, reaching the final stage of a fully-fledged argument:

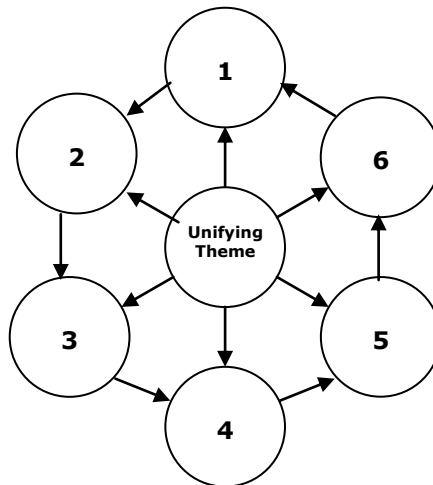


Fig. 2.5: Representation of argument (adapted from Figure 3.4 Andrews 2010:47)

This seems a much closer representation of what students are aiming to do in developing an argument. It represents relationships between ideas at different levels and has scope for disciplinary differences in the kinds of relationships that are acceptable. In addition, the idea of 'heaps', 'complexes' and 'concepts' aligns with what students actually try to do i.e. generate ideas around the topic at random and move gradually towards a coherent argument.

Of relevance also is Andrew's discussion of visual representations of argument (Andrews 2010). He suggests that the 'visual' representation in figure 2.5 is essentially reliant on verbal concepts. He contrasts this with purely visual argument represented by a single image or the juxtaposition of two or more images. This is of interest in the context of the supposed preference amongst dyslexic learners for visually presented material. The idea that a visual representation may be reliant on verbal concepts blurs the dividing lines between visually and verbally presented material.

It seems therefore that using a model of argument such as Toulmin's is not appropriate, nor are adaptations of it. A more useful way of thinking about it is to focus on the relationships between ideas at micro, mezzo and macro levels, i.e. sentence, paragraph and global levels, as shown in Andrews' diagram and to be aware of differences in these relationships within different subject areas. It seems that in analysing argument a subjective

approach that looks for key indicators of these relationships is preferable to a formal model.

In summary so far, I have discussed the ways in which an academic literacies approach to essay writing opens up avenues of possible difference in essay writing experience. Writers may understand and respond differently to the knowledge making practices in different disciplines and courses. These practices invoke different identities, which interact with previous experience and current concerns and generate different social relations within context of culture and context of situation. The analysis of essay texts requires integration with students' accounts but definitions of coherence and looser interpretations of argument are likely to be helpful.

It seems that this approach to writing expands the picture of writers identified as dyslexic and suggests the importance of seeing those identified as dyslexic as writers rather than only as dyslexic. It is tempting when dealing with the writing of this group to attribute any difficulties to dyslexia, whereas these different perspectives can be equally important in the understanding of difficulty. However, the connections between dyslexia and cognitive process approaches to writing and the lack of concern for 'errors' raise some questions about whether an academic literacies approach can fully accommodate a study with writers who are identified as dyslexic.

2.2.4 Possible contribution of other perspectives on writing

It is possible that an academic literacies approach may not, on its own, allow adequate account to be taken of important areas of thinking about dyslexia. This prompts a brief look at approaches to writing beyond academic literacies to explore any further possibilities.

(i) A cognitive approach

It was suggested in Part 1 that cognitive approaches to writing could be connected with cognitive characteristics of dyslexia, particularly in terms of working memory. Further exploration suggests that more connections can be made, in particular in relation to planning essays. Hayes and Gradwohl Nash (1996) identify planning by abstraction (setting top level topics and how to organise them); planning by analogy (having a template that helps to specify language and structure); and planning by modelling (where writers mentally model the sentence to be written). They also discuss the interleaving of planning and writing. This allows new ideas to be generated during writing, gives feedback on how the plan is working and reduces memory load (Hayes and Gradwohl Nash 1996). Flower (1994) proposes three different kinds of planning: schema-driven, where writers have experience that provides ready-made 'instructions'; knowledge-driven, where the writers knowledge is extensive and ready structured; and constructive, where the writer has to construct a plan specific to a rhetorical and content situation. Torrance, Thomas and Robinson (2000) explore the strategies of 715 undergraduate psychology essay writers in a questionnaire based study. They categorise their strategies as a minimal-drafting strategy, an outline-and-develop strategy, a detailed-planning strategy, and a "think-then-do" strategy. The two latter strategies seemed to lead to higher quality essays.

The work of Emig (1983) suggests that writers plan differently for different kinds of writing; she finds no difference in quality of writing between writers who made outlines and those who did not. Hounsell (1984) also found that planning methods were less important than the purpose of the planning. These views of planning allow fundamental distinctions to be made between written plans usually made before beginning writing and the kind of planning that is recursive and can occur at any point in the writing process. This distinction tends to be lost amongst assumptions that writers plan, draft, write and edit their essays in a staged process. These views also emphasise differences in how writers plan.

From the cognitive field also insights have been gained into revising processes. In the dyslexia literature interest is in comparisons of speed and effectiveness in identifying different kinds of problems (e.g. Farmer et al. 2002). From a cognitive perspective in the writing literature, research identifies underpinning processes and differentiates between revising for meaning and editing surface features, differences that are not always made clear in essay writing guidance. A model representing revision processes (Flower, Hayes, Carey, Shriver, & Stratman 1986) emphasises the importance of the detection and diagnosis of text problems and the difficulty of reading both for comprehension and for text problems at different levels. This requires both knowledge about text goals and plans and a complex control structure that allows all of these processes to be invoked and sequenced (Hayes 1996). Hayes (1996) suggests that experienced writers are more able to attend to both local and global problems whereas inexperienced writers attend only to problems at the sentence level or below. Kellogg (1996) discusses the difference between reading the text of others and reading one's own with a view to revision. He suggests the search for mechanical and higher level changes and the difficulty with reading one's own text as 'new' creates a heavy burden on the central executive. This approach therefore broadens the concept of revising and allows connections with dyslexia to be made concerning the cognitive load involved in it.

Much quoted work by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) introduces a further concept of interest. They suggest that two models best account for the development of meaning making in children. They suggest that children develop from knowledge telling, where events are written in the order in which they are generated, to knowledge transforming, where writers are able to move between a content space and a rhetorical space in order to set goals, to organise and take account of audience. This emphasises a developmental element and raises the possibility that writers with little experience may lag in this developmental process.

(i) An expressivist approach

This approach was discussed in the Introduction as one of several ways of conceptualising essays, with its focus on individual meaning making and creativity (Johns 1997). It is of further relevance because of its connection with so-called inexperienced writers and development of an academic persona. Elbow (2000) suggests that, by writing regularly using familiar language forms, the writer's academic voice has scope to develop alongside personal development within the academic context. It is suggested that this may avoid the aping of academic language without ownership of it (Barnett 2007; Elbow 2000). The use of learning journals as a more narrative and creative form is also seen as a transitional stage in the development of an academic voice (Creme 2008; Somerville & Creme 2005).

This view raises questions about the relationship between dyslexic and inexperienced writers. I suggest that dyslexic writers are not necessarily inexperienced by nature of their dyslexia, but they may be because of its effect on writing development, or for cultural reasons separate from dyslexia. Those in this position are likely to be doubly disadvantaged. Academically accepted language forms have not been available because of socially constructed lack of exposure, alongside cognitive inefficiencies that slow down their development. Based on experience, this is difficult to disentangle and the dangers of writers 'aping' expected forms are paramount. This can result in bizarre forms of expression that impede genuine development, but are difficult to counter in the pressured environment of deadlines and word count. This situation perhaps illustrates the interwoven nature of the social and the cognitive. It also leads to discussion of a further perspective on writing, described by Johns (1997) as a socioliterate approach.

(ii) A socioliterate approach

This approach is termed by some as a 'social cognitive' view of writing (e.g. Flower 1994); for others it is viewed as social acculturation (Lillis 2006); for others still it leans more strongly

towards academic literacies (e.g. Kress 1989; Lankshear 1999). However, not to include these approaches would not do justice to a number of eminent and much-quoted commentators on writing in HE who present a social context perspective not theorised as academic literacies.

In a much-quoted work, Bartholomae (1985) suggests that students need to write in particular ways before they understand what they are and assume the role of expert in response to a reader they know to be more knowledgeable than they are. They have to 'try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding and arguing that define....the various discourses of our community' (Bartholomae 1985:134). Ballard and Clanchy (1988) analyse feedback comments and essay extracts from different disciplines and show how students have to learn the code for different methods of analysis in different disciplines. They show the same student producing a quality essay in anthropology, and a lesser quality literature essay.

Hounsell (1988), discussing his seminal study of undergraduate essay writers in history and psychology, suggests that the meeting of context requirements is inhibited by tacit and culturally distinctive dimensions. Hounsell categorised his participants' essays according to different conceptions of argument. There were differences between history and psychology: history required a coherently structured, well supported argument; psychology required the rooting of discussion in reliable empirical findings. He suggested there were a number of sub-components to argument – interpretive, organisational and data. Those that succeeded achieved all of these; those that struggled tended towards an arrangement of facts and ideas, and relevance and exhaustive coverage of data were prioritised.

The workings of context are also shown in a more recent study. McCune (2004) similarly created hierarchies of more or less effective ways of presenting evidence, a coherent structure or clear conclusions, but this study went on to analyse whether change to conceptions occurred over time and with input. The findings,

though based on a small sample, suggested that other factors such as motivation and previous learning experience inhibited change.

We can see therefore that long-standing work has recognised the social dimensions of constructing an argument and producing a coherent structure, which seem not to be fully acknowledged in the dyslexia literature. A similar situation occurs in comments on language. Similarly, this is described as much more than knowing how to construct grammatically correct, well-ordered sentences and has led to the suggestion that remedial courses to improve spelling and syntax are not what is required to improve student writing (Ganobcsik-Williams 2004; Nightingale 1988).

Hyland (2009:7) contrasts everyday language with academic writing in the following sentences:

If you drink too much and drive, then you are likely to have an accident

Excessive consumption of alcohol is a major cause of motor vehicle accidents

Student writers therefore have to write in highly nominalised, compacted, depersonalised ways. These ways vary according to discipline, where permitted levels of personal involvement, use of specialist terms or directness in expressing opinion are different (Becher & Trowler 2001; Creme & Lea 2009).

Analysis of textual difficulties that writers experience in taking on these expected language roles portrays much more than lack of knowledge or proficiency. Rather it is a struggle to balance the 'fragmentary record of the comings and goings of academic discourse' with writers' own language (Bartholomae 1985:160). Bartholomae (1985:160) shows examples of confused sentences where 'the invisible conventions, the prepared phrases, remained too distant for the statement to be completed'. In the essay comparison of Ballard and Clanchy (1988) already discussed, the quality of syntax, idiom and style deteriorates when the student is less familiar with disciplinary ways. This way of thinking about

language therefore adds further dimensions to cognitive explanations of dyslexia-related language difficulty.

Finally one study examines authorial identity (Pittam, Elander, Lusher, Fox, & Payne 2009). The authors explore authorial identity using a qualitative focus group approach with 19 students. They find that writers do not have a sense of authorial ownership, particularly of essays. There are difficulties in finding the right balance between presenting independent views and showing knowledge of sources. There are also difficulties with the boundaries between paraphrasing and plagiarism.

2.2.5 Conclusion to Part 2

It is suggested that an academic literacies approach, which examines the social practices of writing in context, opens up avenues of understanding about the decisions and dilemmas writers face. I argue that these are equally applicable to writers identified as dyslexic. Furthermore, in relation to my research question to understand the differences in essay writing *experience and essay texts* amongst this group, my discussion emphasises the need to embed these writers within a broader framework of academic writing.

However, my discussion also suggests that an academic literacies approach can not entirely accommodate a study concerning dyslexia. Areas of interest fundamental to the field of dyslexia are not part of an academic literacies approach. Researchers from an academic literacies perspective are concerned with identifying how writers' decisions are socially motivated. They are not interested in the processes and strategies they adopt to achieve their ends; yet these are areas of prime concern to dyslexia practitioners. I suggest that the two approaches can be accommodated, and, in the final section of the literature review, I discuss more fully the departures and meeting points between them, including the implications for research methods.

Literature Review: Conclusion

Establishing a position

It was identified in Part 2 of the review that, in spite of important and relevant insights offered by an academic literacies approach to writing in this study, it could not fully accommodate all the dimensions of dyslexia. The aim in this final section therefore is firstly, to identify the meeting points between a social practice approach to writing and ways of thinking about dyslexia and secondly, to consider points of departure between the two fields and how, for the purpose of this study, they might be combined to form a consistent position.

2.3 Meeting points

In Part 2 of the review, I suggest that writers are enabled or constrained by surrounding discourses (Hyland 2002). In Part 1, I apply similar concepts to dyslexia by suggesting that students have to negotiate 'being dyslexic' according to the positions that the surrounding discourses allow (Hall 1997). The context for students in this study therefore includes not only the discourses that apply to all writers, but also varying discourses of dyslexia. Students bring their previous experience and current understandings to their identity as writers, and for the students in this study part of that experience is that they are identified as dyslexic with all the diversity that that brings.

From an academic literacies perspective, there is also a critical element that identifies the tendency in HE not to recognise the connections between language, knowledge-making practices, identity and social relations (Lillis 2006). This clearly has an impact on students identified as dyslexic as on any others. My suggestion is therefore that we can only understand the writing dilemmas of the students in this study by embedding them in this wider picture of academic writing, that a focus only on dyslexia will not give a complete picture. However, though this brings together these two

areas in important conceptual ways, there are a number of anomalies to be resolved.

2.4 Departures

Five possible points of departure between academic literacies and dyslexia are identified and each is discussed in terms of how they might be resolved:

- Perceptions of problems as either contextually driven or within-person
- Possible theoretical inconsistency presented by strong cognitive connections between writing processes and dyslexia
- The focus on disadvantaged or marginalised groups amongst academic literacies researchers
- Differences in conceptions of 'errors'
- Differences in research methodology

(i) Writing problems as contextually-driven or within-person

Research in the field of dyslexia tends towards identifying behavioural, cognitive or biological differences between dyslexic and non-dyslexic individuals (e.g. Hatcher et al. 2002; Ramus et al. 2003). When difficulties are found in essay texts, connections are made with possible cognitive characteristics of dyslexia (e.g. Berninger et al. 2008b; Gregg et al. 2002), which tend to be conceptualised as cognitive deficit. Even though environmental differences and changes in contextual demands across the age span are recognised (Hulme & Snowling 2009; Shaywitz & Shaywitz 2005), these lines of thought still retain an essentialist idea of 'problems' residing within the individual (Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001).

An academic literacies approach resists deficit models of writing and views 'problems' as residing in the context rather than within the person. This explains the lack of interest of researchers from this perspective in the processes and strategies adopted by writers (Lillis 2001). At the same time, it might contribute to a criticism

levelled at an academic literacies approach, that it lacks practical pedagogical application (Wingate & Tribble 2012). Lillis (2006) proposes that this acknowledged lack could be addressed by facilitating dialogue about writing at tutor/student, disciplinary and institutional levels. However, because of increasing student numbers, the practicality of this is questioned (Haggis 2006; Wingate & Tribble 2012).

How this concept of within-person dyslexic difficulties sits alongside context-driven writing difficulties has implications for whether a constructionist approach can be conceptually consistent. As suggested in Part 1, the issue is whether a core dyslexic difficulty exists as an inherent intractable feature of an individual that becomes expressed in different ways or whether dyslexia is a fluid concept constructed by social conditions. I argue for the latter position, that dyslexia is a social construct and the effects of it are constructed by social and cultural circumstances over time. In some contexts and under some cultural conditions, for some people, these effects can cause serious disadvantage, but in other contexts and other conditions, that might not be the case.

This position seems also to be theoretically sustainable. Foucault, for example, accepts that phenomena have a material existence in the world, but can only take on meaning within the discourses that dominate at a particular historical moment (Hall 1997). Bruner (1990:23) also argues that:

'..it is culture and the search for meaning that is the shaping hand, biology that is the constraint....[but] culture even has it in its power to loosen that constraint'.

Dyslexia therefore is potentially a constraint, but its constraining effect is culturally influenced and even conceived by some as a 'gift' (West 1997). Others beyond the scope of an academic literacies focus, for example Bronfenbrenner's multi-levelled eco-systems, have developed constructs to reconcile the interactions between individual development and the multiple layers of context (Bronfenbrenner 1979).

If writers are not completely at the mercy of cognitive constraints, neither are they at the mercy of cultural conditions, a factor that further supports my theoretical position. As discussed in part 2, writers have some sense of agency. Choices can be made amongst various possible socially defined positions, informed by experience and memory (Gergen 1994). This applies both to the experience of writing and of dyslexia. In terms of research design, it seems that investigations of previous experience and current understandings of both writing and of 'being dyslexic' would be productive towards understanding writing differences.

(ii) Cognitive connections between writing processes and dyslexia: do they imply within-person deficit?

Cognitive research into writing processes offers insights into the experience of writing for students identified as dyslexic and it seems important not to ignore them. This includes the processes of planning, translating into text and revising and the fact that these processes are recursive and operate throughout writing (Hayes 2012; Hayes & Flower 1983). Working memory is clearly implicated in managing these operations (Hayes 1996; Kellogg 1999) and to ignore this would not take adequate account of what is known about the effects of dyslexia on working memory. Conceptions of planning discussed in Part 2 inform understanding of what students are doing before and during writing. Similarly, the processes involved in sentence composing and revising, which are less clear in the dyslexia literature are also important. The question remains of how compatible this is with a social practice approach to writing, because of implications of within-person deficit when problems occur.

However, cognitive processes and discourse practices need not be incompatible. Of relevance is Ivanic's interpretation of intramental and intermental states, that intramental states are constructed by intermental experience (Ivanic 1998). At some point, an intramental thinking state is achieved that results in a writing decision. From a social practice perspective, writers' positions in relation to surrounding discourses have implications for the ease or

difficulty of making writing decisions. From a more cognitive perspective, it is suggested that writers develop a schema for how to proceed (Johns 1997), but Johns suggests that this still involves drawing on past experience of text, content and form to process new texts.

On this basis, there seems no reason why writers and their writing cannot be investigated both 'from the outside in' (how decisions are constructed by surrounding discourses), and 'from the inside out' (how decisions are constructed by past and current experience, including dyslexia). This avoids viewing dyslexia-related constraints in an essentialist way or as a deficit.

A further within-person concept that is prioritised in work with dyslexic students is metacognition (Reid 2009). Yet it is ignored by researchers taking a social practice approach to writing. Wray (2002:302) describes metacognition as 'a gradual increase in active conscious control', involving self-understanding and self-monitoring (Wray 2002). However, again the concept of metacognition encompasses social dimensions. McLoughlin et al. (2002) suggest that monitoring requires being able to link to other learning experiences and context requirements (McLoughlin et al. 2002). Metacognition therefore is seen as a way of circumventing the constraints of dyslexia and is achieved partly by awareness of previous experience and context.

From an academic literacies perspective, part of having a sense of control comes from knowing what discourse communities allow, and how to position oneself in relation to them. The argument of researchers such as Ivanic (1998) and Lillis (2001) is that what is permitted is implicit. Hence writers' sense of control is diminished, not by lack of cognitive resources, but by features of the context.

In summary therefore, it seems theoretically consistent to view writers and texts both 'from the outside in' and 'the inside out' and this can involve not only investigating how the context constructs their writing decisions, but also, without taking an essentialist

position, what writers actually do to achieve the finished essay and how they understand and manage what is expected.

(iii) The focus on disadvantaged or marginalised groups

A criticism of academic literacies research is that it focuses exclusively on non-traditional students for whom identity issues are of particular relevance (Wingate & Tribble 2012). It is suggested that implicit culturally determined writing practices marginalise certain groups that now gain entry to university (including those identified as dyslexic) and research from an academic literacies perspective aims to reveal how this occurs (Ivanic & Lea 2006). This raises two questions about my approach to this study: firstly, whether dyslexia should be seen as identifying a disadvantaged, marginalised group, and, if this is the case, whether I should adopt a critical stance in order to identify the implications for these writers.

My experience leads me to resist any assumption that dyslexia is inherently marginalising. Student accounts (Pollak 2005) and my own experience suggest that some certainly feel marginalised, but others are creative and resourceful contributors to their discourse communities. The difficulty is that it becomes impossible to separate generally identifiable characteristics of dyslexia from the cultural experiences of 'being dyslexic' that may or may not lead to a negative outcome. It is also difficult to separate dyslexia from wider linguistic and social influences that enhance or diminish the resources that individuals can bring to their university writing experience. I prefer therefore not to assume dyslexia is a disadvantage, but obviously to be open to the potential for its negative consequences.

This leads to the further question of how far to adopt the critical stance inherent in an academic literacies approach. Hyland (2009) makes a distinction between research that is overtly political (as discussed by Fairclough and Wodak 1997), and that which emphasises the need to make tacit agendas more explicit. Wingate and Tribble (2012) suggest that the latter stance is important for all

writers. In concordance with this view, I am interested in investigating the effects of what appear to be tacit agendas on students identified as dyslexic, thus including them in 'mainstream' thinking about writing, rather than treating them as a separate group.

(iv) Differences in conceptions of 'errors'

A further anomaly between dyslexia-related and academic literacies research into writing is how problems and/or 'errors' in essay texts are addressed. These include surface level errors in spelling, punctuation and sentence construction. In this study, comparison of differences in text problems is a necessary part of answering the research question and therefore this difference in approach is a concern. Researchers into writing from an academic literacies perspective do not analyse texts for 'errors' or ways in which texts fail to communicate for fear of objectifying texts and distancing them from writers and context (Lillis & Scott 2007). This is associated with a skill deficit model of writing (Turner 2011). In contrast, analysis of 'errors' is engrained in work with students identified as dyslexic and patterns are considered to give insight into dyslexia-related mental processes (Gregg et al. 2008). 'Errors', however, tend to be conceptualised as a dyslexia-related deviation from expected standards.

A way to avoid this conception is to consider the ways in which 'errors' are socially constructed. Nystrand (1982:66) classifies them as mismatches in 'textual space' between writer and reader. These can occur at graphic, syntactic, semantic, textual or contextual levels. Shaughnessy (1977), in a study of the errors of basic writers, suggests that problems occur because writers' limited experience means that linguistic patterns are not established and consequently writers are not aware of communication breakdown. She found that grammatical 'errors' were not more prevalent in this group. However, the difficulties that Shaughnessy attributes to lack of experience could be associated with dyslexia.

A further part of the problem is that the focus on practices in academic literacies research has moved discussion away from exploring texts (Turner 2011). Those working in an EAP environment maintain that work on texts with students is an obvious way to reveal textual features and academic cultural practices (Hyland & Tse 2004; Wingate & Tribble 2012). Turner (2011) studied proofreading practices with L1 and L2 student writers in a university setting. She found great anxiety about inaccuracy amongst students and concerns about equity when support was accessed. Amongst writing tutors, she found differences in views about their role: for some helping students to achieve accuracy was acceptable and for others not. Amongst academic staff, she found what she considers to be an ill-judged desire to separate form and content - the content was their realm, someone else should deal with the rest. She suggests there is a cultural expectation of a certain kind of writing which is only noticeable in its absence and how situations are rectified is culturally complex.

Based on experience rather than research, similar concerns and attitudes prevail for students identified as dyslexic. Some expect their dyslexia 'to be taken into account'. This is a problematic notion and policy in individual universities varies, with different policies often applied to examinations and coursework. Others have an added stake in proving their credibility and go to enormous lengths to achieve accuracy. A further issue is that marking criteria are not usually explicit about loss of marks for surface errors, and they are sometimes subsumed under the heading of presentation.

It is therefore necessary to decide whether to ignore surface errors as an expected occurrence in this group as there is nothing new in the expectation of more of these kinds of errors. It seems that discussion of the strategies and conditions that surround 'errors' is more important than what they are. The focus of interest is writers' awareness of errors, their strategies for dealing with them and the effects of being error prone or indeed of achieving accuracy on them and their writing.

(v) Differences in research methodology

In Part 1 of the review, I suggest that, with a few exceptions, research into essay writing favours control group studies that investigate differences between dyslexic and non-dyslexic writers. Writing tasks are mainly set for experimental purposes and are timed. Whilst these methods may have been suitable for purpose, they are inadequate for a qualitative study of coursework essays because of failure to take adequate account of the academic writing context. Only a very few studies examined 'real world' writing behaviour, and methodology is not always clearly theorised. An exception was the study by Price (2006), who operationalised a specific theory of dyslexia and took a phenomenological approach.

The research methods of those working from an academic literacies perspective favour ethnography, which means 'gathering naturally occurring data under normal conditions, from numerous sources, typically over a period of time, without interfering with the writing context' (Hyland 2002:31). It concentrates on writers' understandings of the task and surrounding situation and might include in depth interviews about written products and drafts (Candlin & Hyland 1999). It involves 'observing the practices surrounding the production of texts' (Lillis & Scott 2007:11) and attempts to understand how writers, whether successful or not, draw on surrounding practices (Pardoe 2000).

This study takes up a number of the methods from this perspective, the details of which are discussed further in the following chapter. However, in contrast to an academic literacies approach, I also investigate writers' strategies. This involves discussing how essays develop and examining written plans and evolving versions. It involves accounts of what writers do as well as how they understand expectations and perceive themselves as writers. As discussed above, this need not lead to a within-person deficit approach. In addition, because my research question focuses on understanding differences in experience and texts, comparisons between participants and texts is necessary and this again is not part of academic literacies work.

Because of the contribution of writing process approaches, I briefly consider methods associated with this. Johns (1997) suggests that learner centred rather than text centred approaches brought about major developments in research methods. Rather than relying on text analysis, qualitative methods became widely used in attempts to understand what writers were thinking as they wrote. The case studies of Emig (1971, taken from examples in Emig 1983), with 12th grade English students and their essays, are described as pioneering (Hyland 2002). Smagorinsky (1994) reviewed methods such as verbal reports, retrospective interviews, task observation and analysis of several drafts. Another widely used method was think aloud protocols, where writers were asked to think aloud as they wrote, (see Hayes & Flower 1983 for description of methods).

In spite of these major advances, problems were identified and Witte and Cherry (1994) make the important proviso that it is impossible to capture all the thought processes of writers. In retrospective interviews for example, writers could impose their own narrative on events (Smagorinsky 1994) and think aloud protocols have been criticised for giving an incomplete picture and for claiming to reveal processes common to all writers (Hyland 2002). Some of the above methods might interfere with writing, and this could particularly apply to dyslexic writers. In spite of making a major contribution to writing theory and methodology, process approaches have been criticised for not identifying individual differences (Grabe & Kaplan 1996) and for emphasising writing as an individual rather than a social act. They also do not explain the reasons why writers make particular decisions.

2.5 An emerging position

The outcome of this review suggests a study which takes a holistic picture of the dyslexic participants, embedding essay writing within an academic literacies framework. From this perspective, interest centres on the effects on writers of knowledge-making practices, on writer identity and social relations within and beyond disciplinary discourses. Essay texts are viewed as both constructing and being constructed by the beliefs of the community of which they are a

part. They are viewed as containing linguistic indications of writers' individual positions and of how they understand and relate to surrounding discourses. For those identified as dyslexic, this approach includes previous and current experience of 'being dyslexic'. It also includes the effects of national and institutional policy and individual encounters with academic and support staff.

In contrast to this approach, dyslexia research has focused on pinpointing characteristics that are shared by a particular population in order to identify the phenomenon of dyslexia. There is agreement about the likely presence of particular characteristics such as phonological difficulties or working memory inefficiencies, but, beyond that, dyslexic individuals are seen as displaying many different manifestations of dyslexia or sometimes none that are obvious. This diversity reflects the interwoven effects of environmental, cultural and linguistic conditions and their capacity to affect structures at brain and cognitive levels (Frith 1999; Gilger & Kaplan 2008). Genetic predispositions may or may not be enacted depending on developmental factors and environmental conditions (Snowling et al. 2003; Snowling et al. 2007) but negative effects can emerge under exacerbating conditions well into adulthood (Grigorenko 2008).

Overlaying this varying potential at brain, cognitive and behavioural levels, are the cultural meanings attached to the concept of dyslexia. For researchers such as Hulme and Snowling (2009), dyslexia is conceptualised as variation amongst a set of defined cognitive characteristics with diverse effects but situated within the individual. For those taking a more sociocultural approach, surrounding discourses of literacy and intelligence, for example, have a role in actually constructing and defining the concept. It remains debatable whether we can think of dyslexia as involving a consistently identifiable core difficulty. Rather we should think of it as a fluid culturally defined concept with potential genetic constraints, whose expression is culturally influenced.

For practitioners working with HE students identified as dyslexic, an important part of the task is to explore with them the individual

workings of these diverse possibilities, based on the students' own narratives; on observation and exploration of strategies; and discussion of their individual reading and writing processes. Taking a 'purely' academic literacies approach, therefore, with its focus on the practices of surrounding contexts, would not capture this. Furthermore, it would not recognise adequately the parallels between research into the cognitive processes of writing and dyslexia. In addition to an academic literacies perspective therefore, the study also incorporates accounts of strategies, and participants' perceptions of how they manage their own learning and the requirements of the context. In order to fully investigate the differences in writing amongst this group, I also look at their essay texts with a view to understanding more about how they develop coherence at local and global levels. This includes comparison of their plans, where applicable, and their evolving and final essays.

I suggest that these two lines of investigation, 'from the outside in' and 'from the inside out' are theoretically compatible, though, as discussed, research methods vary between the two fields. Therefore, in the following chapter, I consider methodological approaches that are appropriate to both, including the detail of the participant group and the methods for generating and analysing data.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The study attempts to answer the question of how we might understand the wide-ranging differences in the essay writing experience and in the essay texts of HE students identified as dyslexic. This involves the exploration of students' understandings of what is expected in their essays, their perceptions of themselves as essay writers and how they position themselves within their surrounding discourses. In contrast to writing research designed to investigate the social practices of writing, my study involves dyslexia. Part of these students' experience, therefore, involves different discourses of dyslexia and differing relationships associated with it. I am also interested in their strategies and how their experience of dyslexia might affect what they do to achieve their ends. Discussion of strategies is further informed by parallels between cognitive research into dyslexia and research into the cognitive processes of writing.

In this chapter, I discuss the research design and the decisions that inform it. It is divided into two parts. The first includes discussion of the research paradigm in relation to my ontological and epistemological position. I then discuss the methods and approach to analysis, including ethics. The second includes detail of the participants, data generation and the development of the coding framework. My purpose overall is to establish a methodology that, as far as possible, reconciles the multiplicity of approaches to dyslexia with my own preference for socio-cultural models of dyslexia and writing.

Methodology: Part 1

Theoretical approach to methods and analysis

3.1.1 From starting points to research paradigms

(i) Achieving a position

It is impossible to eliminate the personal and social values of the researcher from the research process (BERA 2000). Denzin and Lincoln (2005:22) consider that research 'is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied'. My own position and starting points for the study therefore have ontological and epistemological implications.

Mason (2002:15) suggests that researchers should be clear about the nature of the social reality they wish to investigate. She lists different ontological properties (minds, beliefs, attitudes, interpretations, subject positions, identities), which might be differently located, 'for example, in people, bodies, practices, discourses, in social, legal or administrative structures.' Gubrium and Holstein (1997:101) suggest that researchers are differently positioned on a '*lived border of reality and representation*' [authors' italics]. Similarly, it is important to be aware of how it is decided that a social phenomenon can be known (Mason 2002). Blaikie (2007:18) describes this as 'a philosophical grounding for establishing what kinds of knowledge are possible – what can be known – and criteria for deciding how knowledge can be judged as being both adequate and legitimate.'

It is therefore necessary to adopt a research approach that is consistent with the position discussed in the literature review. May (2001:14) describes the stance of idealism as a position where social life is understood through people's 'selection and interpretation of events and actions.' In epistemological terms from this perspective researchers are interested in interpretations and

engagement with how their own and others' understandings come about. There is no suggestion of positivist notions of disengagement from the subject matter (May 2001). Blaikie (2007) associates idealism with a constructionist epistemology, where researchers cannot observe the world without the influence of theories, background knowledge and previous experiences. Mason (2002), however, warns against simplistic matching of positions; she suggests that it is necessary to keep all aspects of the research process in mind. Seale, Gobo, Gubrium and Silverman (2007) similarly argue for a pragmatic approach that includes experience, practice and the nature of the research itself in decisions about methodology. May (2001:37) also adds the importance of the disciplinary background of the research and that theoretical perspectives are not 'hermetically sealed'; there is a constant process of clarification and mediation between theories.

In the light of this discussion, I see the positions of idealism and constructionism as consistent with my starting points and my research question. From this perspective, meaning develops through shared interpretations, shared practices and language within historical and cultural settings; there are no absolute truths (Blaikie 2007). I am interested in how individual differences in *essay writing experience and essay texts* may be socially constituted and how those differences also develop from individual experience and understandings, all of which affect writing processes and decision-making. I am also aware that my own position as an academic support tutor and the environment of the study are integral to the research process rather than a barrier to be eliminated. This is discussed further in due course.

These positions then have implications for the research paradigm. Again this is not a question of matching ontological and epistemological positions to paradigm, rather of being mindful of the overlaps and mediation between approaches, according to the purpose of the research and my own position as researcher. It is self-evident that I reject positivist and post-positivist approaches. The former relies on the testing of predicted explanations of behaviour and on the detachment of the researcher (Cohen &

Manion 1994; May 2001). The latter involves the discovery and verification of theory (Denzin & Lincoln 2005), often through a process of falsification (Blaikie 2007). Other paradigms considered are Interpretivism, Ethnomethodology, Foucaultian Discourse Analysis and Critical Theory.

(ii) Possible paradigms

Interpretivism

From this perspective, researchers are interested in how the common sense understandings of social actors make the social world meaningful (May 2001). Researchers move out of their own historical setting to view the world from the actors' perspective (Schwandt 2000). This is the essence of a phenomenological approach; researchers are looking for 'typification' of ways of being, based on actors' accounts, but as though it is something separate from themselves (bracketing) (Gubrium & Holstein 2000:489).

An interpretivist approach has some relevance to my study in that I am interested in participants' understandings from their perspective, how they make the social world of essay writing meaningful to themselves. If by typification Gubrium and Holstein (2000) mean patterns, I am also seeking possible patterns in essay writing behaviour, to explore similarities and differences in the writing activities of this group. However, I see my research role as part of their world, which has the capacity to change accounts according to the position I adopt. A different researcher may elicit different accounts. Also the bracketing of the world of the research participants does not allow for the view that they actively construct and are constructed by the social world.

Ethnomethodology

According to an ethnomethodological viewpoint, social order is actively built by members' interactions and practical reasoning (Gubrium & Holstein 2000). Researchers are interested in how actors build these social meanings. Blaikie (2007) stresses that it is the local context of the situation that gives meaning to participant accounts. An affinity with an academic literacies approach to writing

is apparent and, as discussed in the literature review, it is recognised that ethnographic approaches are frequently used in this field of research (Hyland 2002; Lillis & Scott 2007; Russell, Lea, Parker, Street, & Donahue 2009).

This has clear relevance for students' accounts of their essay writing understandings and practices. In talking about what they are doing they are attempting to bring order to the immediate context of their discipline, their department or even a particular module in relation to what is expected in an essay. They show how they draw on surrounding practices (Pardoe 2000) and also show how they construct their positions as dyslexic in their particular setting. However, this approach is sometimes criticised for its emphasis on the local context (Gubrium & Holstein 2000).

Foucaultian Discourse Analysis

The relevance of Foucaultian precepts have been discussed in the literature review in relation to how surrounding discourses constrain and enable writing decisions and different ways of 'being dyslexic'. From this perspective, focus is on wider systems of power and knowledge rather than the local (Gubrium & Holstein 2000) and knowledge is 'true' only within prevailing historical and cultural contexts (Burr 2003). In research from this perspective, the dynamics of power and knowledge-making practices are often revealed by close analysis of naturally occurring talk and texts, referred to as discourse analysis, such as in the work of Fairclough (2003) and Gee (1999).

Whilst I identify with Foucaultian precepts, as already discussed, I do not see discourse analysis as an appropriate way of answering the research question. This form of analysis focuses on how language constructs ideology through discourses, rather than on the subject (Fairclough 2003). My interest is in differences between social actors in a specific setting and how those differences are constituted. As discussed also in the literature review, I see subjects as having some agency in how they position themselves (Gergen 1994; Scott 1999).

Critical theory

A critical approach is concerned with how discourses sustain unequal power relations (Fairclough & Wodak 1997), and this is seen in terms of identifying a reality that needs to be changed (Burr 2003). I am conscious of unequal power relations and possible effects on writers, as discussed from the academic literacies perspective in the literature review. However, these effects, including the implicit nature of some writing requirements, inform my analysis rather than determine its purpose.

(iii) Discussion

The two most relevant approaches seem to be ethnography and a Foucaultian informed position. The former takes account of the local setting and the latter wider national and institutional discourses. This aligns also with context of situation and context of culture (Halliday & Hasan 1989) applied by Lillis (2001) (see previous chapter for explanation). Lillis' focus however is on how writing decisions are socially motivated in local and wider contexts. This does not account for my wish to look at writers from 'the inside out' as well as from 'the outside in'.

Gubrium and Holstein (2000:500) combine local and global perspectives under the term 'interpretive practice'. They see it as a combination of discourses-in-practice and discourse practices that allows for an interplay between the 'whats' and the 'hows' 'in order to assemble both a contextually scenic and a contextually constructive picture.' This combination seems to allow for an investigation of what writers do as well as how they are positioned within the context.

My intention therefore is to 'make visible how practitioners of everyday life constitute, reproduce, redesign or specify locally, what institutional and cultural contexts of their actions make available to them' (Gubrium & Holstein 1997:115). In other words, I am interested in how student essay writers identified as dyslexic make sense of what is expected when they write an essay; how they draw on local contexts, such as their tutors and subject areas

and wider national and institutional discourses of dyslexia and academic writing; and how their decisions are enacted in their writing process and products. I am interested in individual differences in these areas, but I do not take an essentialist view of how differences occur. I suggest that students draw on their surrounding contexts and how they do this is influenced by their previous experience and the kinds of discourses to which they have been previously exposed.

3.1.2 From research paradigms to methods

Denzin and Lincoln (2005:25) define methods as 'strategies of enquiry that put paradigms of interpretation into motion.' Mason (2002) approaches methods as possibilities for data generation, though she strongly maintains the importance of consistency of methods with ontological and epistemological positions and theoretical standpoint. I therefore discuss my choice of methods and my reasons for rejecting others.

Implicit in the local perspective of ethnographic studies and the wider discourse-oriented view is the study of language use, either in the form of discourse or conversation analysis (Gubrium & Holstein 2000). I have already discussed why discourse analysis is not appropriate and I reject conversation analysis for the same reasons. It is not my intention to analyse in depth the language of students' accounts. However, this raises the issue of whether language analysis has any place in my study as something separate from the analysis of essay texts. I suggest that a level of language analysis occurs in the form of attention to the language choices students make in order to explain phenomena. This is on the basis that differences in language choice give insight into different understandings of the same phenomena. It is also important to note possible differences in verbal fluency associated with dyslexia

A further issue to resolve is the difference between 'naturally occurring' and 'researcher provoked' data (Silverman 2001:159). The essay texts are naturally occurring data; they are essays written for 'real-world' learning and assessment. Student accounts

would have been naturally occurring if I had recorded 'real-world' support sessions for essay writing. Silverman (2001) suggests that interviews are all pervasive in today's society and the concept is diminished. However, against this, he suggests we need to balance speed, ease of access and authenticity in interview situations. In this study, these advantages apply. The recording of support sessions would not capture adequately a whole view of the essay writing process. In addition, it is important ethically for students to know whether my research or support role is foregrounded; it is then clear whether it is their agenda or my research needs that drive the session. This is not to say that the roles are not blurred, but with an overt research role, the boundaries are easier to manage.

The most appropriate method for generating student accounts is through semi-structured interviews. Qualitative interviews have an important role where researchers wish to foreground people's understandings and experiences (Mason 2002). Semi-structured interviews allow the following of a thematic guide, but also the opportunity for participants to generate meaning on their own terms (May 2001). However, it is important to be aware of what interviews can be expected to tell us.

(i) Semi-structured interviews

Miller and Glassner (2004) consider that interviews from a radical constructionist perspective cannot make claims about the social world external to the interview. To counter this, they argue that the purpose of a qualitative interview is to explore the points of view of the participants, the reality that is theirs, even if shaped by culture. People are moved to create and maintain meaningful worlds and interviews can say something about the social world on which these meanings are based. They suggest that interactionist strategies best achieve this. This involves making subjectivity visible and focusing on the ways in which interviewers present themselves as the nature of the interaction affects what cultural stories participants tell and how they tell them. The interviewer should be seen as someone who 'is neither firmly entrenched in the

mainstream, nor too far at any particular margin' (Miller & Glassner 2004:130). Power differences can affect this, so rapport building is crucial.

Holstein and Gubrium (2004:149) emphasise that participants and researcher are actively creating meaning during an interview. Both are constructing a reality of the moment by drawing on 'conditions of possibility'. Meaning therefore is 'neither predetermined nor unique' (:150). The constructive nature of interviews is particularly important for some students identified as dyslexic. Few, especially those identified after university entry, have had opportunity at university to construct a narrative of dyslexia for themselves. Similarly, participants may never previously have been asked about essay writing practices in such detail. The participants are therefore not providing pre-formed accounts, but constructing them as part of the interview process.

This emphasises the interactive aspect of interviews; the nature of the interaction will shape the meanings that are generated (Fontana & Frey 2005). Interviews therefore are influenced by the academic support setting and the relationship with academic support tutors previously experienced. I suggest that the setting enhances the interview interaction. Academic Support is a space in which students are familiar with working one to one with tutors and with talking about their learning. They can express concern about their study and about themselves as learners in ways they may not feel able in their academic departments. Tutors work in student-centred ways according to the students' agenda.

This means that the interactive constructive nature of the interviews (Holstein & Gubrium 2004; Miller & Glassner 2004) has implications for my role. For ethical reasons (discussed further in the section of ethics), I build into my research design the possibility of offering support if needed. I am open to adjusting my role from researcher to support tutor as necessary. This also involves role switching for the student from active research participant to learner. It thus means that power relationships will be subtle; the setting reduces power imbalance, but does not discount it.

Christians (2000:148) discusses power as 'relational, characterised by mutuality rather than sovereignty'. Lillis (2001:9) tries to counterbalance her role as 'knowledgeable insider' by taking the role of listener rather than tutor/speaker. My power is in the knowledge about writing and dyslexia that I can apply to what participants say. However, I also have the role of listener and I genuinely need students' explanations of subject related concepts.

(ii) Essay texts

Discussion of documents as data in the methodology literature does not generally include essay texts, but some of the principles discussed are pertinent and echo the dimensions of an academic literacies approach already discussed. Atkinson and Coffey (2004) emphasise that documents cannot be used as direct evidence of the social world, but that they create their own kind of social reality. Their language, their rhetorical features and their means of production and consumption can be examined to investigate how different levels of representation become constructed. May (2001:183) discusses how documents construct a social reality:

'What people decide to record is itself informed by decisions, which, in turn, relate to the social, political and economic environments of which they are a part'. [They might] 'reflect the marginalisation of particular groups of people and the social characterisation of others'.

In this study and in these methodological terms I investigate the language, rhetorical features and the means of production. As well as gathering accounts of the students' thinking about the essay, I explore how the essays evolve, including plans, where applicable, evolving versions and final texts. As discussed in the literature review, I analyse local and global coherence and argument and surface features characteristic of dyslexia. However, I analyse them not just for errors but with their social and political background in mind, with a curiosity about what motivates the students to write as they do.

I discussed in the literature review the importance of integrating analysis of essay texts with semi-structured interviews. Mason

(2002) stresses the need to question how different methods feed into each other and how they integrate logically and intellectually. In the literature review, I show how Ivanic (1998) combines talk about text with detailed linguistic analysis. In this study I use the students' accounts to inform what should be analysed in their essays and their accounts also tell me their thinking about issues that arise. This both contextualises and creates boundaries for analysis.

The theoretical picture developed in the literature review, the research paradigm and the methods described have implications for the thinking underpinning my approach to analysis. I therefore discuss my approach.

3.1.3 Approaches to analysis

I have argued for the importance of embedding these writers identified as dyslexic within an academic literacies framework of academic writing, that this opens up important dimensions to writing that are not usually discussed in relation to this group, but which are clearly relevant to them. I have also tried to develop a methodology that is consistent with this approach. However, it is in the methods of analysis that my study differs most markedly from academic literacies work such as that of Lillis (2001) and Ivanic (1998).

In their ethnographic studies, Ivanic and Lillis record the 'talk about texts' that occurred with their participants in several encounters over a period of time and, for Ivanic, analysis of essay texts was also involved. Their selection and discussion of text is designed to demonstrate particular aspects of their theoretically structured research purpose. The chapter headings in their reporting illustrate their theoretical structure (e.g. for Lillis: '*Restricted access to privileged practice*', '*The regulation of authoring*'; for Ivanic '*The origins of discoursal identity in writers' experience*', '*The discoursal construction of academic community membership*'). In ethnographic terms, they aim to show how the texts and the writers' talk about them construct and are constructed by particular aspects of a social world. Whilst it is apparent how this occurs

differently for different writers, it is not their purpose to compare them, but to show how different ways of being are socially motivated.

My aim is to understand how differences in essay writing experience and essay texts are constituted for a group who are identified as dyslexic, exploring the possibility that social dimensions are part of the picture. Comparison, as a method of analysis, in understandings, approaches and essay texts is fundamental to answering this question. I therefore need an organisational framework for the data that is different from the theoretically structured one used by Ivanic and Lillis.

In broad terms the approach I adopt can be described as abductive and influenced by grounded theory. Abduction is seen as a move from one conception of a phenomenon to a more developed reconceptualisation (Dey 2007). This reconceptualisation is achieved through the coding and hence reorganisation of the data, a method often associated with grounded theory (Blaikie 2007; Dey 2007). It is through this reorganisation that comparisons can be made (Mason 2002). In view of my theoretical stance, 'constructivist grounded theory' as proposed by Charmaz (2000:525), seems more appropriate. This rejects participants' accounts as a view of the 'real' world in favour of recognising the meanings, values and beliefs of both participants and researchers. However, her use of the term 'constructivist' rather than 'constructionist' (my stated position) needs some clarification. Charmaz (2000:510) describes 'constructivist grounded theory' as assuming 'the relativism of multiple social realities' and as recognising the 'mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed'. Her aim is to challenge objectivist, positivist perceptions of grounded theory and in doing so she appears to apply broad principles that could be applied to constructionism.

Blaikie (2007) more explicitly explicates the meaning of both terms. He suggests that constructionism can be seen as an individual activity (constructivism) or a social activity (social constructionism). Social actors construct social meanings for their own and others'

actions (constructivism), whilst social scientists socially construct our knowledge of social actors' realities. In these terms therefore it seems that the use of 'constructivist' does not contradict my own position. However, allegiance to a grounded theory approach raises a number of questions: these include the relationship between data and literature, sampling strategy, how coding is used and the development of theory.

(i) The relationship between data and literature

The issue here is the extent to which coding and analysis are informed by literature-based theory. The issue arises because of expectations in early versions of grounded theory that analysis should be grounded in the data and uninfluenced by theory (Strauss & Corbin 1998). However, others adapt this perception. Charmaz (2000:683) acknowledges the importance of 'sensitising concepts' based on existing knowledge and disciplinary expertise. Kelle (2007:449) suggests that:

Qualitative researchers.....cannot drop their own lens and conceptual networks or they would no longer be able to observe and describe meaningful events, but would be confronted by fragmented phenomena.

As will be shown in Part 2 of this chapter, overarching categories in my coding are informed by the literature. However, lower level codes could be seen as an iterative process between the data, the literature and my experience. At no time do I adopt an a priori approach to coding, where the data is coded onto a pre-established framework.

(ii) Sampling strategy

Cohen and Manion (1994) and May (2001) associate systematic sampling procedures such as purposive sampling with social survey approaches. Mason (2002) suggests that procedures are likely to be less systematic in qualitative research, but nevertheless she stresses that there should be a theoretical logic to sampling that is

consistent with the questions being asked (e.g. how a social process is constituted) and that the strategy adopted defines the kinds of generalisations that can be made. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggest that constructionist researchers are more likely to use theoretical sampling and seek individuals and settings where processes under investigation are more likely to occur. Silverman (2000:106) also considers that in qualitative research samples are more likely to be 'theoretically defined'. In this respect therefore, I follow a theoretical sampling strategy with procedures that in many ways follow a grounded theory approach as identified by Strauss and Corbin (1998): decisions are made from the start about the nature of the group to be studied; decisions are made about whether to follow the same group over time or different groups at different points in time; decisions about numbers evolve according to on-going analysis; sampling is cumulative, i.e. decisions proceed concurrently with data collection and analysis.

(iii) Basis for coding

My approach does not follow the systematic development from open coding, to axial coding to selective coding as proposed by 'purist' forms of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1998). There are a number of other ways of approaching coding that influenced my approach. Line by line coding is said to enable close questioning and contextualising of the data (Charmaz 2000; Miles & Huberman 1994) and is of benefit so long as data is not forced onto codes and coding is not finalised too soon (Miles & Huberman 1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) view codes as tags or labels that pull together sections of data in both descriptive and inferential ways. They suggest that coding encourages analysis during data collection and lays a foundation for cross-case analysis by revealing common themes and directions. Mason (2002:158) views them as 'unfinished resources' for further interrogation and comparison of the data. Dey (2007) considers that on-going data generation and the development of increasingly higher level categories builds a mosaic or patchwork as a picture slowly develops. He sees these interpretations as dependent upon the context in which they were generated and reflective of the researcher's knowledge and

experience. My approach draws on all of these, particularly on Dey (2007:82) who says that grounded theory had a 'tacit influence' because of his use of coding of data, constant comparison and theoretical sampling.

(iv) Building theory

Grounded theorists propose that theories are constructed from the hierarchical ordering and comparison of codes (Coffey & Atkinson 1996). However Coffey and Atkinson reject this and consider it to be a creative process, moving between data and the ideas of others to achieve a more conceptual abstract level of thought. Mason (2002:175) describes it as developing an argument after constant interrogation of the data assisted by coding. She delineates four different kinds of arguments: how something has developed; how something works or is constituted; how phenomena compare; and causes and predictions. I consider that the main 'argument' in this study is how differences in essay writing experience and essay texts are constituted.

This discussion illustrates the different approach taken from the essentially ethnographic one adopted by the researchers discussed. I would suggest also however that there is some shared ground. I talk to students about their previous experience; I talk to them about their texts; and I examine their final and evolving essays. I am interested in how their accounts construct different understandings and experiences of essay writing. My different purpose is reflected in how I organise the data in order to analyse it. The detail of this process is given in Part 2 of the Methodology section, but before that I discuss how I manage the data and issues of credibility and ethics.

3.1.4 Data management

To assist with data management, I used NVivo qualitative data analysis software (QSR International Pty Ltd 2002). The main advantages are described as more speedy and exhaustive analysis and an increased likelihood of finding negative cases (Gibbs 2002;

Seale 2010); improved quality of comparison and less reliance on arbitrarily collected quotations from data (Kelle 2007); and ease of revision of coding (Miles & Huberman 1994). Kelle (2007) also describes the possible disadvantages of forcing codes onto data, an over-reliance on grounded theory methods and a distancing of the researcher from the data. Gibbs (2002) describes NVivo as useful for fine-grained analysis and for encouraging constant questioning of the data and following up of hunches. In my study, it was essential for managing the volume of data in line by line coding. I used the 'browse code node' facility extensively to inspect all the data coded under a node and from this could check and develop higher level categories. I valued the ease with which codes and categories could be adjusted as analysis progressed. Though I did not use all the facilities within the programme, it enhanced the retrieval and comparison of data and hence the credibility of my analysis.

3.3.5 Issues of credibility

The terms reliability and validity are those most usually associated with credibility and they have been reinterpreted in a number of ways in an attempt to uproot them from their place in quantitative research. Guba and Lincoln (2005:207) suggest 'authenticity criteria' which include evidence of the views and voices of all stakeholders, raised level of awareness in the research participants and prompting for action as an outcome of the research. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) consider that evaluation is an artistic and political process.

Seale (2007) is critical of applying moral and political values as a replacement for quality criteria. He suggests that a clear connection between arguments and supporting evidence is of prime importance, whether facts are seen as reality or constructed. Researchers should be self-critical and seek to identify deviant cases. Silverman (2001:239) follows a similar line. He suggests that reliability can be demonstrated by 'low inference descriptors' and presenting data in a way that allows readers to evaluate the claims made. He rejects triangulation and respondent validation as

ways of verifying accounts and suggests five other methods: analytic induction, constant comparative method, deviant case analysis, comprehensive data treatment and tabulation of results. I have attempted to use these as guidance in my analysis.

3.1.6 Ethical considerations

Documents consulted prior to writing this section were Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA 2011; 2004); Good Practice in Educational Research Writing (BERA 2000) and the University of Nottingham Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (University of Nottingham 2013). As a background also are the Code of Ethics of ADSHE (2009) and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (HMSO 2005).

Despite the apparent clarity offered by professional guidelines, effective consideration of ethics is complex. Schwandt (2000) emphasises the moral and political commitments involved in transforming what others do and say into public knowledge. Mason (2002) suggests that formal ethical guidelines provide a base-line for decisions, but she also suggests that asking difficult questions and examining the criteria by which ethical decisions are made strengthen the ethical basis of a research project. The issues discussed are based around the BERA guidelines of 2011.

(i) Voluntary informed consent

This can be viewed as a value-neutral agreement or one that takes into account the roles and responsibilities within individual research contexts. In effect, each is a new 'union of knowing' with its own moral values and responsibilities (Schwandt 2000:204). This involves asking who is involved in the research and its purpose (Mason 2002). It was important for me to foster participants' trust and interest in the research and in my credentials for conducting it. I therefore provide written information about how I obtained their names, who I am, the purpose of the research and what is involved and I request their written consent to participate (see Appendix 2).

This clearly locates the research within the Academic Support setting. This is explained in Part 2 of the Methodology chapter.

The purpose of the research situates participants as making a valuable contribution to the under-researched area of dyslexia and essay writing, which is of value to other practitioners, and to the research field of dyslexia. It is also presented as a possible benefit to them in the opportunity to articulate their essay writing practices. I explain my role as an academic support tutor experienced in working with dyslexic students on their writing and give some idea of my approach to dyslexia. For example, I state that I do not assume that students identified as dyslexic cannot write essays.

I make it clear that support is available if a need should become evident during the research process. This is guided by the framework of disability legislation in which the study is set. For many students, the 'reasonable adjustments' required by law include an agreed number of support hours. In the pressured environment in which students are writing, I assume that participation in the research may impact on their time to access support. It is sensible therefore to deal with support issues as they arise in the research process. Also, I have a moral obligation that detriment should not be caused by participation in the research (BERA 2004).

(ii) Deception

Situations where deception might be justified, such as in medical research (Christians 2000), or covert observation in ethnographic research (Silverman 2001), are not applicable. However, deception can occur in more subtle ways. For example, participants cannot know all the ways in which I might interpret what they say based on my knowledge of dyslexia and academic writing. This relies even more of an interactive trusting relationship in interviews (Miller & Glassner 2004) and according to Silverman (2001) is not counteracted by the sharing of data with participants. I attempt to make clear, however, my stance towards dyslexia and a non-judgemental approach to writing.

(iii) Right to withdraw

Mason (2002) suggests that unexpected ethical dilemmas can arise during a research project so that the implications of being involved may only become apparent over time. The opportunity to withdraw if circumstances change is therefore made clear.

(iv) Incentives

Incentives relate to what motivates participants to take part in the research. Silverman (2001:272-275) suggests this might be 'debating public policy', 'increasing people's options', or 'offering a new perspective'. This suggests that incentives are linked to the moral value and social contribution of the research and, as already discussed, this is the case in this study. However, in the context of the study, participants may feel that their writing can gain from participating. This is very subtle as articulating thoughts about essays may develop thinking. I discuss this further in my analysis.

(v) Detriment arising from participation in the research

Researchers have to be aware of the effects of their research on those involved and I have already discussed time implications. I make clear in the information I give how long I estimate the process might take. I work to the students' time scales, allowing their deadlines and work demands to control interview dates and schedules for sending work to me. I am also aware that the interview process might raise dyslexia-associated issues for which the research interview is not an appropriate place for discussion. This further emphasises the flexibility in the roles I adopt, and has implications for disclosure which are discussed under the relevant heading.

(vi) Privacy

The issue of privacy is more complex than the simple use of pseudonyms or other methods of confidentiality. Christians (2000) suggests that pseudonyms and disguised place names can be

recognised. However, certain moral and legal obligations are obvious, such as the requirement for personal data to be stored securely in accordance with data protection legislation. It is also important that participants are made aware of who will have access to the data. All of this is communicated in information given to students at the outset.

However, some researchers question privacy as an automatic principle and suggest that the decision is informed by the values of the specific research context (Schwandt 2000). Ivanic (1998:110), for example, uses her participants' real names and refers to them as 'co-researchers' based on their shared enterprise of 'subverting dominant conventions'. Whilst my purpose is less overtly political, I share her preference to validate the students' contribution to knowledge in this area. The positive contribution of adult accounts of dyslexia is rarely acknowledged (Herrington 2001) and students usually value the opportunity to explain their dilemmas to others in order to increase understanding of dyslexia. I therefore give my participants the choice of using their real first names as part of their consent. I do not use the term co-researchers, however, as I have doubts about the equality in a research relationship where areas of knowledge between researcher and participant are very different.

(vii) Disclosure

Disclosure concerns my responsibilities in response to information participants disclose to me during the research process (BERA 2004; 2011). For these participants, disclosure of dyslexia is an issue. All the participants had signed university documentation disclosing their dyslexia. This allows their name to be passed to others for the purpose of their support. They also signed giving their permission to participate in the research, having been told how the data might be shared. All, in fact, wished their real first names to be used. I left open the possibility for this to change if they wished.

A further issue of disclosure is where it becomes evident during the research that the student is experiencing, or likely to experience problems beyond the remit of the research interview. Where this occurs, I suggest the student makes contact with the support tutor with whom they are registered and ask their permission to alert the tutor to the problem so that she/he can encourage contact.

A further aspect of disclosure is the practice of debriefing participants at the conclusion to the research (BERA 2011). I use the final interview to discuss with students their thoughts about the research process. It will be impractical to share the final report on an individual basis, though some attempt could be made to inform students where they might access it. It could also be said that the need for de-briefing is minimised by the shared values of the research setting and the students' ownership of and vested interest in the research material, i.e. an assessed coursework essay.

3.1.7 Conclusion to part 1

Part 1 of the Methodology presented theoretical underpinnings of the research. I suggest that the combining of the 'what' (what writers do in terms of strategies and processes) and the 'how' (their previous and current experience and understandings of the essay writing context) represents how accounts are constructed both at a local level (context of situation) and at a wider institutional and national level (context of culture). This incorporates some aspects of an ethnographic approach in talk about essay writing and about evolving and final essay texts. It also draws on Foucaultian precepts through an interest in the ways that writers' choices are constrained and enabled by surrounding discourses. My analysis follows some, but by no means all, aspects of grounded theory in line by line coding of the transcribed interview data, the development of increasingly abstract concepts and categories, constant comparison and theoretical sampling. With the assistance of NVivo software, this allows cross-case comparisons, which in turn informs the answer to my question of how differences in essay writing experience and outcome are

constituted. In Part 2, I set out in more detail the processes of data generation and analysis.

Methodology: Part 2

Data generation and coding framework

Part 2 of the Methodology chapter includes information about the participants and the basis on which they were recruited. This is guided by the theoretical sampling strategy outlined in the previous section. It also includes detail of the interviews conducted and the process of gathering the evolving and final essay texts. Finally, I discuss the basis of the coding framework for the interviews.

3.2.1 Generating data

(i) The research participants: an overview

Table 3.1 gives information about the eleven research participants.

Name	Age and year of course	Dyslexia identified?	Degree subject(s)
Adam	21yrs yr 3	Yes yr 1 university	Archaeology
Beth	20yrs yr 3	No	Archaeology
Ian	20yrs yr 2	No	Philosophy
James	21yrs yr 3	No	Archaeology
Jenny	20yrs yr 3	Yes yr 2 university	Archaeology
Liam	20yrs yr 2	Yes yr 2 school	Philosophy
Rachel	21yrs yr 3	No	History
Rob	21yrs yr 3	Yes yr 2 university	Archaeology/History
Ruth	21yrs yr 3	Yes yr 10 school	History
Sophie	19yrs yr 2	Yes yr 1 university	Archaeology
Suzanne	20yrs yr3	Yes yr 2 university	Archaeology/Classics

Table 3.1: Profile of the research participants

The participants were all undergraduates, nine doing single subject honours and two joint honours. The group consisted of 7 archaeology students (2 not identified as dyslexic); 2 history

students (one identified as dyslexic, the other not); 2 philosophy students (one identified as dyslexic, the other not).

(ii) Recruitment of participants

Students identified as dyslexic were recruited via the Academic Support (AS) database. There is no assumption that this includes all students identified as dyslexic in the university, but it has to be assumed that those who do not make contact with AS prefer not to identify themselves and not to access the reasonable adjustments available only through AS. It would not be ethically appropriate therefore to recruit beyond the AS database. The database, as well as showing that a student is identified as dyslexic, records their course, their year of university entry, address, date of birth, whether they are a 'home' or 'international' student and the date of their most recent assessment. AS individual student files were consulted to establish when dyslexia was first identified.

Students who met the initial criteria were e-mailed with a brief outline of my research and asked to contact me for further details if they were interested. Those expressing interest were sent a more detailed explanation sheet (Appendix 2) and were telephoned a week later if they had not responded. They were offered a meeting to discuss further what was involved and if in agreement permission was formally sought and signed for. At that point a date was set for an initial interview. To identify archaeology students not identified as dyslexic, an e-mail was circulated by an academic tutor in the school to all students excluding first years who were not dyslexic. The non-dyslexic philosophy and history students were identified by their dyslexic peers.

There was no attempt at representational sampling, i.e. finding a group that shares as many features as possible (Mason 2002). However, a number of criteria influenced my decisions about the selection of participants, some of which were made from the outset and others which evolved during data generation and the early stages of analysis.

Starting points

- Dyslexia assessment
- Not first year students
- Subject area of archaeology
- Work with students during the course of a single assessed coursework essay

The most fundamental criterion was that students had a dyslexia assessment done by an educational psychologist or a specialist teacher according to the guidelines of the SpLD Working Group (2005), with no other assessed co-existing SpLDs. This does not make them a homogeneous group in terms of their cognitive profiles (Grant 2009) and no attempt was made to identify commonalities in profile. My starting assumption is that whilst they meet criteria for the identification of dyslexia, they are a diverse group in terms of cognitive profile, history and experience. A further starting point was that I would not work with first year students so that all had some experience of university level writing and some opportunity to learn about the writing expectations of their discipline. I did not discount postgraduate students, but it happened that all who responded were undergraduates.

From the outset also I chose to work with students from the Faculty of Humanities rather than Science. It is here where the most generally recognised form of an expository essay is written. A number of students on the database from this faculty were from the Department of Archaeology and I chose initially to recruit from this subject area. AS tutors have a good relationship with this department and it would be supportive of the work. I was aware that within this one subject area different kinds of essays are required, ranging from theoretical, scientific and artistic interpretations of the archaeological record which challenge student writers in different ways.

A further decision was to work with students throughout their process of writing one coursework essay. This could not be seen as a longitudinal approach in the same way as that used by Lillis (2001), for example, who talked with students about their essays

over two years. The advantage for her was that she saw the same student writing different kinds of essays. However, I am more interested in exploring the whole essay writing process over a 'real world' timescale. This is important in view of the fact that pressure of deadlines and time perception and management can be problematic for this group. I am also interested in comparing different approaches to the whole task.

Evolving decisions

- Whether age was important - both chronological age and age at which dyslexia was identified
- Whether to include students from other humanities subject areas
- Whether to actively seek international or 'inexperienced' writers
- Whether the level of previous contact with AS was important
- Whether to include students not identified as dyslexic
- How to decide on the number of participants

Age was a dimension that I considered carefully in the recruitment of participants, both chronological age and age at which dyslexia was identified. As already discussed, disadvantaged, 'mature' student groups are often the focus in academic literacies writing research. My initial recruitment found all 'traditional' age students and I considered whether this was important. As discussed in the literature review, my purpose is not to identify disadvantage amongst non-traditional groups. Also, I consider it to be of interest to identify issues for this 'mainstream' group and, in any case, there could be no attempt to make generalisations about differences between age groups. I therefore did not actively recruit 'mature' participants. My only concern was whether the sample offered enough opportunity for comparison to have fully investigated the topic (Mason 2002) and whether deviant cases might occur (Silverman 2001) and initial analysis suggested differences between participants that would allow these criteria to be met.

The age at which dyslexia was identified was more of an issue as my initial recruitment presented students who had all been identified after arrival at university. It was possible that those who

were 'familiar' with their dyslexia might have a clearer understanding of its impact on their writing and affective responses may be different. I therefore ensured that subsequent choice of participants included those who had been identified earlier. It is recognised that early identification and support can be protective of academic achievement (Riddick 2010) and it was important to compare whether these factors influenced different experiences of writing.

The decision to include students from subject areas other than archaeology was made in response to students' accounts of writing in different disciplines. I initially thought that archaeology would offer enough variety in kinds of writing, but, during data generation, some students showed particular sensitivity to different requirements in different disciplines and I decided to follow this up further.

International students were not included, even though it is recognised that this is an important area in dyslexia and writing research. I considered that the experience of writing and issues in the final essay text might be so different that comparisons would be impossible. The nature of the mother tongue language may also affect how dyslexia is manifest (Goulandris 2003). In addition there are recognised cultural differences in academic writing expectations (Grabe & Kaplan 1996) and students' starting points may be very varied.

In terms of whether to include 'inexperienced' writers, I left open this possibility until data generation was potentially complete, but ultimately decided not to recruit these writers. Firstly, the criteria for identifying such a group are difficult to define and secondly I considered that the existing participant group presented great variation and there would be little to gain from adding to this. I acknowledge that a similar but separate study targeting 'inexperienced' writers would be of interest.

A further point to consider was whether participants may have previously accessed support for essay writing from AS and whether

this was important. It is recognised that patterns of use of this kind of support is very variable and not enough is known about the reasons for this variation (Weedon & Riddell 2007). I wished to leave open the possibility of working with both those who perceive themselves as having difficulty and those who do not as this comparison was important. I therefore did not take account of the amount of support accessed or the reasons for it.

An important decision was whether to include writers who are not identified as dyslexic. I clearly have no intention to make generalisable comparisons between the two groups, but it became apparent that it would be of interest to have some indication of shared concerns and of what might be attributable to dyslexia and of whether this suggested clearly defined difference or degrees of difference. The inclusion of this group posed a further question when it emerged that three of the four could be termed as 'high achievers' and the fourth was on a 2:2/2:1 borderline. I therefore considered whether I should include 'struggling' writers who were not identified as dyslexic. Again I rejected this. Defining 'struggling' is problematic and the existing group of non-dyslexic writers had all expressed dilemmas and provided a basis for comparison. Further work with a 'struggling' group would be of interest, however.

From a grounded theory perspective, numbers of participants evolve according to on-going analysis (Strauss & Corbin 1998) and it is suggested that a point of theoretical saturation is reached when no new data is emerging. For Mason (2002), numbers need to be sufficient to allow comparison and to present deviant cases. I therefore stopped recruiting further students as the above decisions were made and I was confident that I had captured the field, especially the heterogeneity of dyslexic experience. Ultimately, for the purpose of this study, I consider that work with traditional aged dyslexic writers, who are not failing in assessment terms, is timely and of interest.

(iii) The interview data

Three interviews were conducted with each student, an 'initial interview', a 'planning interview' and a 'retrospective interview' conducted after the essay was completed. After the initial interview, students were asked to contact me when they were ready to begin writing an essay of their choice and dates were set according to deadlines and students' preferences. All of the students followed through the whole process after the initial interview. Interview guides were developed (Appendices 3a-3d), but topics for discussion arose in a different order and in different ways with each student. The guides acted as a checklist and prompt for my questions and thinking as the students' accounts developed.

The content and structure of the guides were informed by the literature, my experience and my methodological approach. Tomlinson (1989:159-161) discusses the openness-closedness of interview procedure ('the extent to which the interview process is open to respondent's frame of reference as opposed to being framed by interviewer's terms') and the conceptual-contextual nature of the interview focus ('the extent to which the topic level of the interview is general and conceptual as opposed to concrete and contextual').

The guides contain a mix of theoretical terms that prompt my thinking from the literature and questions that translate these into more concrete terms of essay writing with which students are very familiar. In this way I encourage the students' frame of reference in how they can talk about their essay writing. I can also discuss essays in concrete terms, but informed by more abstract concepts associated with the literature. For example, the questions about dyslexia in Appendix 3a were informed by work such as that of Riddick (2010), Morgan and Klein (2000) and McLoughlin et al. (1994), who discuss the effects of early experience. The work of Ivanic (1998) and Lillis (2001) were also an influence on many of the writing concepts, such as how the writers think about audience and how they include their own opinion. Discussion of language was

also influenced by them, but at the same time by the cognitive and dyslexia literatures on working memory. The influence of many years of experience of talking with dyslexic students about their learning and writing was also significant.

Initial interview for those identified as dyslexic

My aim in this interview is to explore students' understandings of what is expected in their essays, how they perceive themselves as essay writers and how they set about the essay writing task. Based on the idea that previous experience influences identity as writers, the interview begins by talking about experience of school and of being dyslexic. Even though dyslexia may not have been identified until arrival at university, unidentified dyslexia is likely to have an impact on learning. I am interested in possible links between their histories and how they understand writing expectations and how they perceive themselves as writers. I ask about how they understand what is expected and valued in their departments and how far they see themselves meeting these expectations. I ask about their motivation, work patterns and affective responses and also about their process and strategies for writing an essay, including any support they access and how they use it. We discuss linguistic factors, such as how they feel about the vocabulary, sentences and spelling that they produce and their strategies for doing so.

Initial interview for those not identified as dyslexic

This differs only in how the history of these students is addressed (Appendix 3b) and in establishing at the start that the participants are not dyslexic. This was done by asking what they knew about dyslexia and if it had ever been suggested. The Vinegrad checklist (Vinegrad 1994) (Appendix 3b) was then used, selected at the time because it was normed with adults. I explained that this was a precautionary measure for the purpose of my research. If by any chance there was any suggestion of dyslexia, students were told that the research process would be discontinued, and we would discuss what they wished to do. They were told that even if dyslexia was suggested, there would be no obligation to follow up if they did not wish to do so. In the event, there was no suggestion of

dyslexia either in discussion or in the checklist responses for any of these participants.

The points discussed with this group were the same as for those identified as dyslexic, including discussion of spelling, vocabulary and sentence construction. Other than when talking about learning history, the focus in the interviews for both groups was on writing rather than dyslexia. This provides a basis of comparison of each individual as writers. It also raises issues about how to incorporate dyslexia effectively. I noted that the dyslexic participants tended not to talk about writing in terms of the effects of dyslexia. Indeed, experience suggests that to ask how dyslexia affects them would not be productive. They each do what they do in the best way that they can, but do not necessarily connect their ways of working or even difficulty with dyslexia. This means that it is I who make those connections using my knowledge of dyslexia to interpret their accounts. That is not to say that they do not mention dyslexia, but they do not necessarily attribute their ways of writing to it.

Planning interview

The purpose in this interview was to discuss and observe the writers' thinking in their preparation for a specific essay. Students were asked to proceed in the same way as they would normally. I retained copies of any written plans, but not all created pre-writing plans. The interview guide served both as a prompt for questions and as a guide for my observation and thinking as the students told me about their essay. I discussed how they approached and interpreted the question, the content that was required and whether they knew how they would argue. This encouraged discussion of how they accessed the content and made decisions about relevance and incorporating their own ideas. We also discussed their understandings of argument. I asked them about their reading and note-making, how they organised their notes and moved from their notes to writing the essay. I was aware throughout of the language they used in their accounts to talk about the concepts involved. I was also aware of when I needed to take on a support role if students asked advice or appeared to be struggling.

After this interview, students indicated when they were likely to be writing the essay and the deadline. It was their decision on whether they wished the retrospective interview to be before submission. Students agreed to e-mail the essay as it evolved after each writing session and then the final version.

Retrospective interview

The focus in this interview was to enquire if the essay had gone as planned, or if anything unforeseen had arisen. I asked students about their feelings about the finished essay. This interview was more open-ended than the other two and was designed to allow me to respond to students' needs in a support role as appropriate. For my research purpose, I looked through the essay with the student asking them for comments about aspects such as referencing, use of language and development of argument. Their needs varied, with one student asking me to check for grammar and punctuation errors, and another whether she had used and referenced the literature appropriately. Another was still uncertain about the structure and our discussion prompted him to make further changes.

The timetable for interviews and evolving decisions

Data generation was driven by two 'windows' when students were most likely to be writing essays: November for semester 1 deadlines and February/March for semester 2. Table 3.2 sets out the timescale of interviews and my evolving thinking.

	Initial Interview	Planning Interview	Retrospective Interview
Suzanne	11/11/04	17/11/04	
Trial data generation and analysis, working iteratively with reading to clarify research question and theoretical stance. Decision to conduct retrospective interviews			
Rob	17/11/05	09/02/06	07/03/06
Adam	23/11/05	07/12/05	14/12/05
Review of interviews and research question. Decision to include participants not identified as dyslexic			
Beth	09/03/06	15/03/06	10/05/06
James	08/11/06	15/11/06	28/11/06
Jenny	14/03/07	15/03/07	22/03/07
Review of how many participants. Decision to recruit dyslexic participants identified pre-university, to include other humanities subjects but not 'inexperienced' writers			
Sophie	07/11/07	14/11/07	21/11/07
Ruth	08/11/07	22/11/07	13/12/07
Liam	05/02/08	14/02/08	07/03/08
Rachel	21/02/08	04/03/08	12/03/08
Ian	22/02/08	05/03/08	20/03/08

Table 3.2: Timetable of interviews and evolving decisions

Recording and Transcribing

All interviews were recorded using a minidisk player to achieve a good quality recording as unobtrusively as possible. Lack of rewind facility required repeated playing of recordings, which was an effective way of becoming familiar with the data. The data were transcribed word for word, with notes of pauses, hesitations, and humour or irony. In this way, I became very aware of differences in verbal fluency in the ways in which the students could express themselves.

(iv) The essay data

Each student was asked to e-mail me the version of the essay after each writing session. My intention is to trace how the essay evolves and what this might reveal about their process. I am interested in whether changes are made and if so what kinds of changes, for example, whether the essay evolves in a linear fashion or is constantly re-worked as content develops; whether changes are made to language and any evidence of spelling or grammar problems. Students were asked to indicate the version at which 'support' was accessed, allowing me to compare versions before and after.

In the final version, I am interested in whether the essays reflect the processes, dilemmas or difficulties discussed in the interviews and how far problems are corrected. I also carry out analysis and comparison of their texts as discussed in the literature review.

3.2.2 Coding the interview data

The first steps in the coding of the interview data consisted of line by line coding of transcribed interview data (open codes in grounded theory terms). An example is shown in figure 3.1.

R I like to actually start writing it as soon as possible rather than reading all the references.

C How do you feel it helps you to do that?

R I just feel a bit more comfortable in myself, that I've actually got something written down. And also it does spread the reading out a bit, cos I'm not one that goes and sits in the library and reads all day. I tend to have quite a short attention span when it comes to reading. I've started using, I've got yellow tinted glasses, that was another recommendation in my educational psychologist report and they help me a little bit. I still find I can't sit down for a long time, for long periods of time and just read. The way I do my essay seems to spread the reading out and I can use the index of the book more when I've written a section. I can look for a word and then look for that and then just read a section of a chapter rather than having to read the whole chapter to get the basic idea.

.....

.....

C How conscious of assessment are you when you're writing the essay?

R I mean generally with the essays I know it is going to be the tutor who is gonna mark it so it is something that I'm quite conscious about, especially when you've got a lecture on the subject. I've started in the last two years writing the essay before like as early as possible in the term, but then waiting until we have the corresponding lecture because then I wait and see how they structure the lecture and the important points that they bring up. So then I look at my essay again and say well they made a bigger point of this, so I'll expand that section and then maybe reduce

Interleaving reading and writing

Creating comfort zone

Aware of problem areas

Maintaining attention

Tinted glasses

Solution finding

Assessment oriented

Time management

Strategic approach

Understanding requirements

Assessment oriented

another section. I'd say it's one of my
main concerns, who is going to mark
it. I do tend to tailor it to suit that.
Generally with most of my tutors,
they've written a book about the
subject, so it's obvious, I always use
that book. It is that sort of thing I do
tend to look at first.

Strategic approach

Fig 3.1: Example of open coding: Rob; Initial interview

Codes are both inferential and descriptive (Mason 2002; Miles & Huberman 1994). For example, 'maintaining attention', 'tinted glasses', 'interleaving reading and writing' could be seen as descriptive. All the codes are informed by my knowledge of dyslexia and writing. In talking about his reading, Rob is describing recognised characteristics of dyslexia. However, my intention is to view them as individual rather than dyslexic features. I did not develop high level categories around characteristics of dyslexia. In this way, there is a basis of comparison between individuals, including those not identified as dyslexic. Codes were also informed by the writing literature. 'Interleaving reading and writing' originated from the discussion of planning by Hayes and Gradwohl Nash (1996); they describe this planning strategy as a way of conserving cognitive resources, precisely what Rob appears to be doing. 'Assessment oriented' is part of discussion about audience for writing. Strong differences between participants emerged in terms of how strongly 'assessors' or indeed any 'audience' were present and how they related to them. These lower level categories therefore arose from the data, but were informed by 'sensitising concepts' (Charmaz 2000:515) in the literature.

Open codes were then refined and grouped under higher level categories. The 'browse code node' facility in NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd 2002) was used to check for overlapping codes and for consistency in the development of more abstract categories and sub-codes. This facility allows browsing of all the data under a single code. Academic literacies concepts of identity, social relations and knowledge-making practices (Lea & Street 1998) influenced the top-level categories of 'Self', 'Relationships'

and 'Essay Practices'. Figure 3.2 shows an example of different levels of categorising in NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd 2002) and Figures 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5a and 3.5b show the higher level 'tree diagrams' taken from NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd 2002) of 'Self', 'Relationships' and 'Essay Practices'. Codes and categories were constantly refined as data was generated. In the following discussion, I clarify the basis of the higher level codes and the first level of sub-categories.

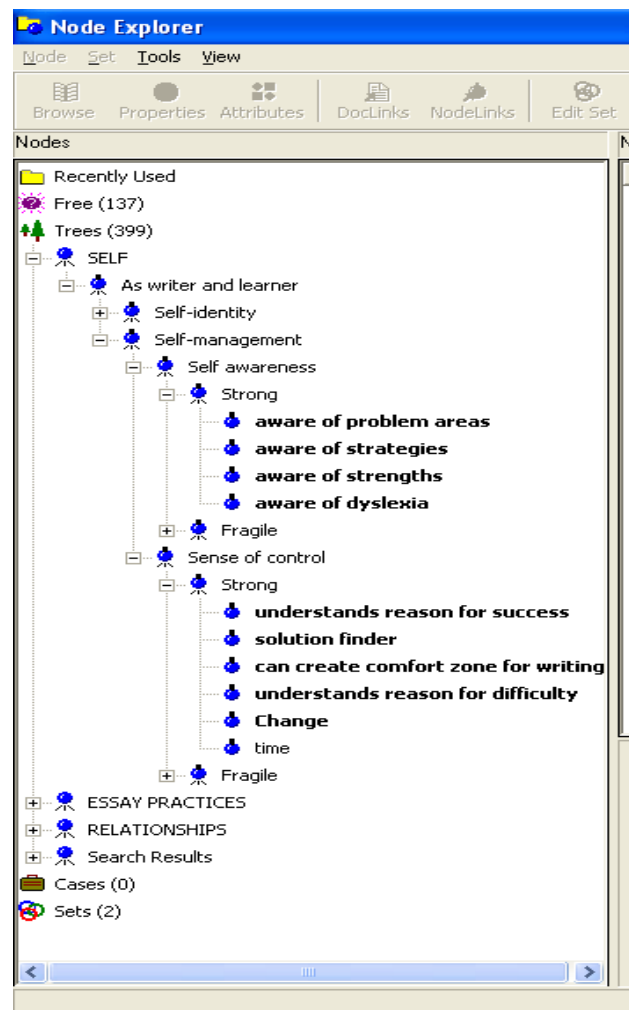


Fig. 3.2: Example of categorising from NVivo

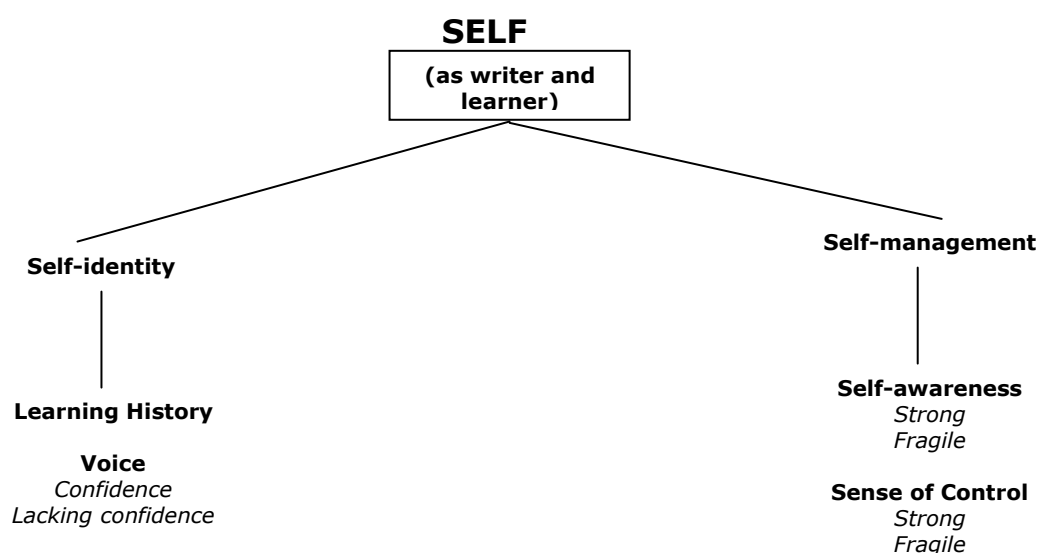


Fig. 3.3: 'Self' coding diagram from NVivo

(i) The Self

In the 'Self' category, data were gathered on how the students constructed themselves as writers. This was viewed as a balance between what the context allowed and the choices that their previous and current experience moved them towards (Hall 1997; Hyland 2009). Aspects of 'self' were constituted by how the students identified themselves in their descriptions of their learning history. This included their starting points at university and in discussing this they revealed something of the 'selves' they bring to their writing (Ivanic 1998) from their past experience. The lasting effects of history on learning for students identified as dyslexic are also well recognised (Burden 2005; Farmer, Riddick, & Sterling 2002; Pollak 2005).

A further aspect of 'self' was the concept of 'voice'. This was interpreted as the student's own voice, the extent to which they felt authoritative in their subject and had the confidence to express an opinion; also their understanding of what was permissible. This emerged from discussion in the interviews of how they dealt with the content in terms of the literature and the need to present their own argument. How they used the essay title also gave insight into this. This refers to the literature on how students juxtapose the voices of the literature with their own (Groom 2000; Hyland 2004). In addition, students are expected to find their own voice amidst

the multiple dominant voices of their discipline (Barnett 2007) and the difficulties and conflicts this presents for all students are well documented (Elbow 2000; Groom 2000; Lillis 2001; Womack 1993). For students identified as dyslexic there are additional factors to be considered. The opportunity to demonstrate a confident voice might be impeded for example by speed of reading, which might compromise a full understanding of the material in the time available (Hatcher, Snowling, & Griffiths 2002; Singleton 1999); or by lack of confidence to expose thinking or compose clear and succinct forms of expression.

The inclusion of 'self-management' as an aspect of self-identity was prompted initially by the data as differences in 'sense of control' were strongly evident. From the early stages of analysis, deciding how to code 'difficulties' was problematic as similar dyslexia-related difficulties were experienced but described in different ways. For some students, they were expressed as problems and had negative connotations. For others, they were expressed in the context of how they were resolved and appeared not to be problematised. I therefore drew on ideas about different levels of awareness as related to compensation (McLoughlin, Fitzgibbon, & Young 1994). My data suggests that the next stage after becoming aware did not just involve knowing an appropriate strategy, but also a particular kind of approach to applying strategies, which led to a 'sense of control'. For example, a number of students described strategies that were designed to make them 'feel better' or 'more comfortable'. This relates to discussion in the dyslexia literature on attribution, locus of control and metacognition (Burden 2008b; Burden 2005; Reid 2009; Riddick 2010).

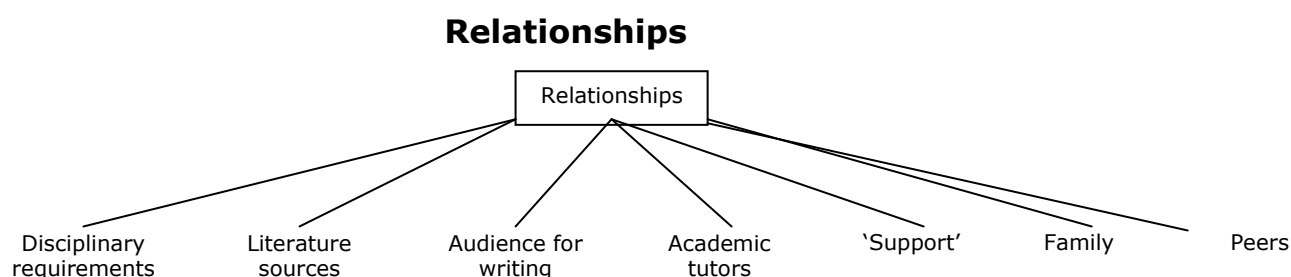


Fig. 3.4: 'Relationships' coding diagram from NVivo

(ii) Relationships

Notions of self-identity cannot be fully realised without reference to relationships with surrounding discourses. The category of 'Relationships' therefore focuses on the ways in which writers interact with and are constructed by the 'voices' of both abstract discourses and specific individuals (Fig.2.6). The category was intended to capture whose voices were foregrounded for different students, the strength of their presence and the students' stance towards them. This is informed by the notions of social relations (Ivanic & Lea 2006), addressivity (Bakhtin 1986; Lillis 2003) and intertextuality (Fairclough 2003) discussed in the literature review. I am interested in how the students understand and relate to the different categories within 'relationships'.

For those identified as dyslexic, this also involved relationships with the 'voices' of dyslexia. How to take on a dyslexic identity was a factor (Burden 2008a) in terms of expectations arising from institutional policy and departmental and individual tutor discourses of dyslexia (Farmer et al. 2002; Pollak 2005). I was interested in how those identified as dyslexic 'heard' the dyslexia-associated voices from academic and support tutors and their peers.

Essay Practices

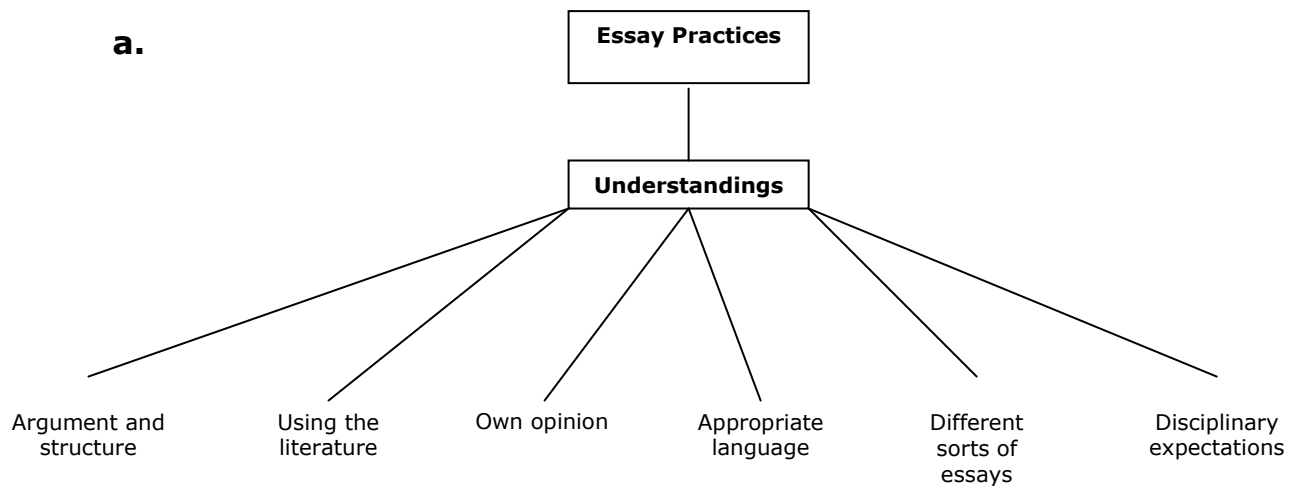


Fig. 3.5a: 'Essay practices/Understandings' coding diagram from NVivo

Essay Practices

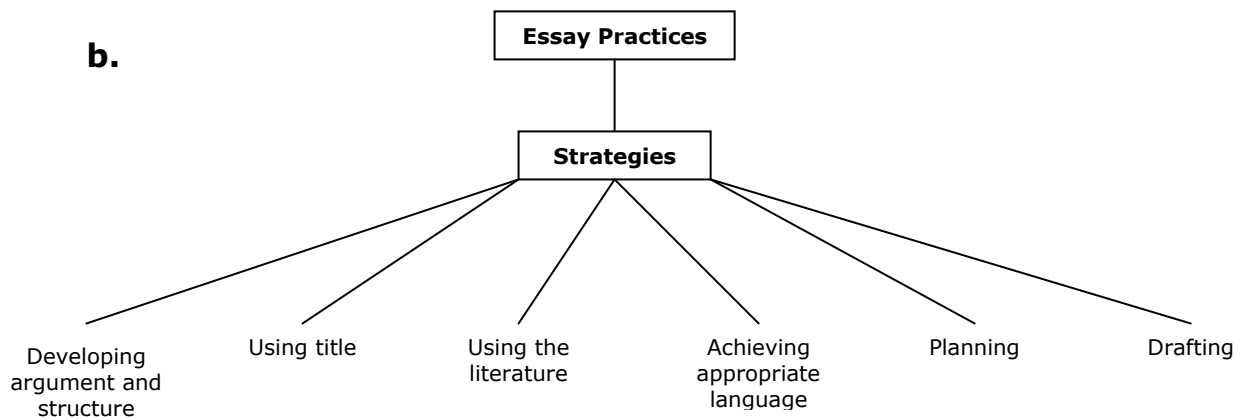


Fig. 3.5b: 'Essay practices/Strategies' coding diagram from NVivo

(iii) Essay Practices

I have discussed how identities become enacted by the dimensions of self and relationships. This clearly influences and is influenced by the students' understandings of essay writing requirements and the strategies they adopt. The 'Essay Practices' category (Fig 3.5a and 3.5b) therefore focuses on how the students understand what is expected and what they do to try and achieve it, hence the division between understandings and strategies.

Some of the dimensions of 'understandings' and 'strategies', such as 'argument and structure', 'using the literature' and 'appropriate

language', have been discussed in the literature review. Coding was therefore informed by this as well as by my experience. The code of 'different sorts of essays' and 'disciplinary expectations' arose from students' awareness of different kinds of essays in different disciplines and their expressed preferences for different types of essays, e.g. essays that were more or less discursive, or compare and contrast essays.

Planning and Drafting can be seen as 'topic-oriented' codes (Kelle 2007) under which was gathered information on the different ways in which the students perceived and carried out planning activities. My assumption about planning is that it takes different forms for different people (Sharples 1999); that it can be used to reduce memory load (Hayes & Gradwohl Nash 1996) and that it can characterise different ways of shaping writing (Creme & Lea 2009). The ways that students do or do not plan give insight into how they attempt to shape and structure the essay and into their individual experiences and thinking preferences. Drafting processes also differed, with some working up the final version as they proceeded, and others re-visiting and revising text already written.

Overall, the coding framework is consistent with my attempt to embed the writers identified as dyslexic within a broader writing framework; my intention is that this will specify the interactions between dyslexia and essay writing in a more rounded way than a focus solely on the effects of dyslexia. The codes are not tightly tied to dyslexia, but refer to writing in general and hence apply to all the participants. However, reference is made to dyslexia in some lower level codes and is implicit in my thinking about them.

3.2.3 Conclusion to methodology and next steps

This chapter has set out the theory behind my methodology, including ethical issues. It has elaborated on methods, on processes of generating data and on the participants. Included also are accounts of the early stages of data organisation. The transcribing of interviews and organising of the data were important early stages in analysis (Mason 2002; Silverman 2001).

In the following two chapters, the analysis is developed further. Table 3.3 shows how the research question is addressed in these chapters.

Research Question		
Understanding differences in essay writing experience and essay texts amongst a group of HE students identified as dyslexic: a view of dyslexia in context		
	Sub-questions	Relevant data
Chapter 3	<p>What are the differences in how the students perceive themselves as writers?</p> <p>What are the differences in how they relate to the context?</p> <p>What are the differences in how they manage themselves during writing?</p>	Interview data coded under 'self', 'relationships' and essay practices/understandings
Chapter 4	<p>What differences are there in strategies?</p> <p>What differences are there in plans, how essays evolve and in final essays?</p>	<p>Interview data: essay practices (but links relevant to all interview data)</p> <p>Essay plans (where available)</p> <p>Evolving versions and final essays</p>

Table 3.3: Addressing the research question

Chapter 4: Analysis Part 1

Analysing the student essay writers: self-identity, context and self-management

The focus of this chapter is on the students' identity as writers – how they feel about themselves, how they position themselves within the context and how they approach self-management and difficulties. This is the first stage in addressing my aim to understand these differences in the essay writing experience of students identified as dyslexic.

Firstly, vignettes are constructed based on the coding framework described in chapter 3. Secondly, further categories are generated from the vignettes and thirdly, comparisons are made between categories. Students not identified as dyslexic are used as a baseline for comparison where appropriate, but the focus of analysis is on those identified as dyslexic.

4.1 Constructing the vignettes

Vignettes are used in social research as a tool to create hypothetical situations as a stimulus for interview response (Barter & Renold 1999). However, they can also be used to gather information about individuals, situations and structures in order to compare perceptions and move from personal experiences to more abstract concepts (Barter & Renold 1999). In my study they act as a summarised picture of individual students as essay writers, and are used as a basis of comparison and to develop further abstract concepts. They were constructed by taking a horizontal slice across the coded data to trace the pathway of individual students through the categories. This was done by using the 'browse code node' facility in NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd 2002) which draws together all the data under a particular code. It was therefore possible to survey how the codes applied to each student. The structure of the vignettes reflects the headings within the coding framework: *Self as writer and understanding of expectations;*

Relationship with 'audience', discipline and others; Self-management, strategies and difficulties. The vignettes are shown in Appendix 4. They are not included in the main text as I viewed them as descriptive rather than analytical and saw their role as laying the foundation for subsequent analysis.

4.2 Categories emerging from the vignettes

Based on the individual student pathways through the coded data, further categories were identified and labelled (Fig.4.1). These were generated by surveying the vignettes for each student and checking with the data that the concept could be supported.

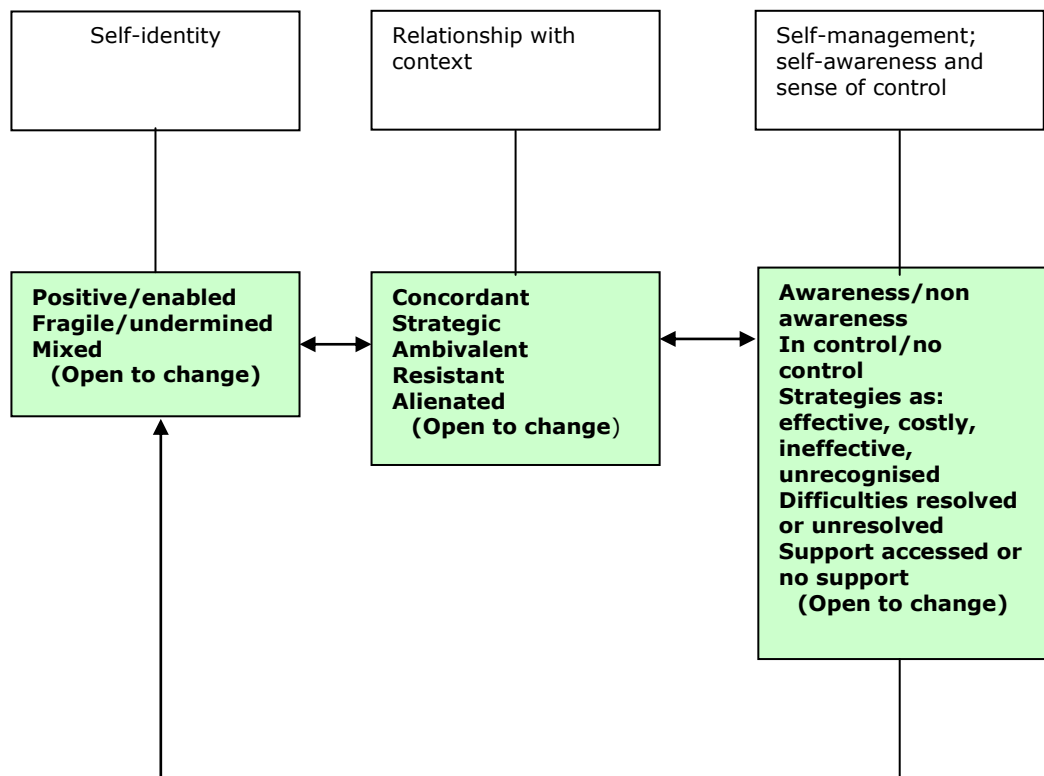


Fig. 4.1: Category labels developed from vignettes

As shown in Figure 4.1 the categories should also be viewed as feeding into each other.

(i) Defining the categories

In the following section the categories shown in figure 4.1 are explained.

Positive/enabled, fragile/undermined

The terms are not evaluative of success, but how the students feel about themselves as essay writers. It is possible therefore for them to feel 'fragile' and 'undermined' and still be successful in assessment terms. I assume that the writers assert their best efforts in the light of their current perceptions. The alternative terms were used in order to situate the description both within the person and within the context; writers may feel enabled or undermined by the context along with the presence or absence of individual resources based on their experience. The terms are not intended to define a stable point at which the writers have arrived, but a dynamic state of 'becoming' or the struggle to achieve it (Barnett 2007:99). This process occurs through 'assemblies' of meaning arising from patterns of experience (Gee 1999:47) and the take-up, rejection or feigning of roles and identities through interaction with particular contexts (Ivanic 1998).

Relationship with context

Concordant: This does not imply successful 'enculturation' into their discipline (Lea & Street 1998) but a concordance between how they position themselves and what they perceive their discipline as requiring. They are achieving authenticity (Barnett 2007) and can decide the role they wish to take up, whether in respect of essay writing or dyslexia.

Strategic: This suggests an approach that is often assessment oriented and actively foregrounds attempting to meet tutor expectations. It is akin to approaches identified by Marton and Säljö (1997:53) where students 'economise on their efforts' partly in response to the demands of the context. It also resonates with some of the key behaviours of a strategic learner suggested by Riding and Rayner (1998) including the selection of specific methods to achieve a goal.

Ambivalent: This reflects a struggle for understanding of expectations because of their implicit nature (Hyland 2009; Lillis 2001; Turner 1999). It implies a slightly jaundiced view of their departments, but does not exclude strong engagement with their subject and disciplinary values.

Resistant: Resistance is knowingly enacted and requires a confident understanding of expectations and confidence in one's own position. A deliberate choice is made about whether to conform to requirements or not. This might involve Ivanic's suggestion of feigning a writing identity (Ivanic 1998), but deliberately doing so.

Alienated: This comes about because of difficulty with understanding or identifying with disciplinary or institutional values to the point where one's own position is undermined. Students do not know what to do or how to be. (Barnett 2007; Bartholomae 1985).

Self-management

This is broken down into self-awareness and sense of control. It makes reference to the relationship outlined by McLoughlin, Fitzgibbon and Young (1994) between self-awareness and development of effective strategies leading to compensation for difficulties. Awareness is crucial but compensation has to be seen in terms of the costs involved in achieving it (Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001). Self-management also involves a belief in being able to achieve one's aims in a particular activity (Burden 2005) and a capacity for self-regulation (Wolf & Kaplan 2008).

(ii) Categories applied to individual students

How these categories apply to individual students is shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. Students can present a mixed picture, which can be in the process of changing. Strengths and difficulties are also constituted differently for different students in the same category and students appear in more than one category. Eight of the eleven students are categorised as feeling strong and enabled, but three of those experience differing degrees of risk to their strengths and are referred to as belonging to a 'mixed' category. Three students are categorised as feeling fragile or undermined. Table 4.1 shows how the students perceive themselves as writers and their relationship with the context.

	Positive /enabled	Fragile /undermined	Concordant	Strategic	Ambivalent	Resistant	Alienated
Adam	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x
Beth*	✓	x	✓	x	✓	x	x
Ian*	✓	x	x	✓	x	✓	x
James*	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	x
Jenny	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
Liam	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	x
Rachel*	✓	xx✓	✓	x	✓	x	x
Rob	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	x
Ruth	✓	x✓	✓	x	✓	x	x
Sophie	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
Suzanne	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓

Table 4.1: Student self-identities and relationships with context. *Students not identified as dyslexic. xx✓ strengths slightly at risk; x✓ strengths at risk

Table 4.2 shows the categories used to label the students' self-management in terms of their self-awareness and sense of control. This is identified by their capacity to understand and operate strategies, both in relation to essay writing requirements and managing affective responses. The main focus of this part of the analysis is how effectively they are able to apply strategies rather than what the strategies are. Strategies are therefore categorised as effective or not effective in terms of resolving a perceived difficulty, or as costly or not recognised. The category of 'no expressed difficulty' is a comparative term and does not exclude the fact that essay writing is an intellectual challenge for all writers. It is used where writers do not explicitly describe or strongly imply difficulty.

	Aware	In control	Strategies				Difficulties perceived as resolved	Difficulties unresolved
			effective	costly	No/ineffective strategy	Not recognised		
Adam	✓	✓ (except structure)	✓	✓	structure	x	Reading speed, memory, maintaining concentration, spelling (some exceptions) towards resolving attribution of success	Structure, 'appropriate' language, word-finding, homophones, (support accessed)
Beth*	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	Word count, referencing conventions, long sentences	None expressed (support accessed)
Ian*	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	None expressed	None expressed
James*	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	None expressed	None expressed
Jenny	x	x	x	x	✓	x	Memory, word-finding,	Concentration, starting, multi-tasking, self-awareness
Liam	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	Spelling, concentration for reading, good day/bad day for reading	None expressed
Rachel*	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	None expressed	Confusion about 'appropriate' language.
Rob	✓	✓	✓	Spotting errors such as punctuation	x	x	Maintaining attention when reading, some visual disturbance when reading, spelling, word-finding,	Spotting errors e.g. in punctuation (Support accessed)
Ruth	✓	✓?	✓?	✓	x	x	Slight spelling difficulty, Towards resolving structure and too many notes	Sentence composition. (support accessed)
Sophie	x	x	✓?	x	x	✓	Structure, 'appropriate' language, vocabulary, comprehension,	Understanding expectations, accessing literature, , awareness of effects of dyslexia
Suzanne	✓	x	x	✓	✓	x	Spelling, some memory issues,	Understanding expectations and 'appropriate' language,

								good day/bad day esp. for word-finding, structure, reading (support accessed)
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Table 4.2: Students’ self-management, strategies and difficulties ***Students not identified as dyslexic**

Table 4.3 briefly outlines the combined profile for each student in order to give an overview for each.

Adam	Mix of positive/enabled and fragile/undermined. Concordant in his understanding and relationship with current context. Strong self-awareness and sense of control. Effective strategies for many problems.	Perceived difficulties: reading speed, memory, maintaining concentration, word-finding, spelling, structure, perception of own language, attribution of success Unresolved difficulties: structure, perception of own language. Changing: attribution of success to chance. Support accessed from housemates, dad and student services (but not currently)
Beth*	Positive/enabled. In some ways concordant with context, in others slightly ambivalent. Strong self-awareness and sense of control. Effective strategies	No unresolved difficulties identified. Support from dad to check for typing errors and long sentences.
Ian*	Positive/enabled. Consciously resistant to ways of being of discipline. Now adopting strategic approach to doing what is required. Strong self-awareness and control. Effective strategies	No unresolved difficulties identified. No support accessed
James*	Positive/enabled. Concordant in approach to context with some elements of being strategic. Strong sense of self awareness and control. Effective strategies	No unresolved difficulties identified. No support accessed
Jenny	Fragile/undermined. Alienated by context. No self-awareness (or reluctance to address) or sense of control. Strategies appear ineffective.	Perceived difficulties: concentration, getting started, memory, word-finding and multi-tasking. Unaware of how they affect her. Unresolved difficulties: concentration, getting started and taking on analysis of own writing. Just beginning student services support
Liam	Positive/enabled. Concordant with context. Strong self-awareness and sense of control. Effective strategies. Aware that may need to adapt strategies as word count requirements change.	Perceived difficulties: spelling, concentration for reading, good day/bad day for reading No unresolved difficulties identified No support accessed
Rachel*	Positive/enabled. Very slightly fragile/undermined in specific area. Concordant with context but some ambivalence. Strong self-awareness and sense of control in most areas. Effective strategies	Perceived difficulties: confusion about appropriate language requirements. Can resolve. No support accessed
Rob	Positive/enabled. Strategic in approach to	Perceived difficulties:

	context. Strong self-awareness and many effective strategies. Strategies for spotting errors costly in terms of time.	maintaining attention when reading, some visual disturbance when reading, spelling, word-finding, spotting errors e.g. punctuation. Unresolved difficulties: spotting errors. Support accessed from girlfriend and student services
Ruth	Positive enabled with some areas slightly fragile/undermined. Concordant with context with some ambivalence. Strong self-awareness and strong sense of control in many ways. Effective strategies in some ways, costly in others in terms of time and effort.	Perceived difficulties: structure and sentence composition. Some difficulties with spelling. Concerns about too many notes Changing situation with addressing notes, structure and sentence problems. No other unresolved difficulties. Support accessed from dad
Sophie	Fragile/undermined. Alienated from context. Little self-awareness or sense of control. Has some good strategies but does not recognise.	Perceived difficulties: structure, accessing the literature, understanding title. Also lack of awareness of good strategies and effects of dyslexia. Unresolved difficulties: understanding expectations, lack of awareness of good strategies and effects of dyslexia. Just beginning student services support
Suzanne	Fragile/undermined. Alienated from context. Strong self-awareness but little sense of control. Strategies are costly or ineffective	Perceived difficulties: spelling, word-finding, memory, reading speed, structure, good day/bad day esp. for word-finding, negative feelings about writing Unresolved difficulties: reading speed, word-finding, structure, negative feelings, good day/bad day. Support accessed from mum and boyfriend. Just beginning student services support

Table 4.3: Profiles of individual students. * Students not identified as dyslexic

Many of the difficulties expressed are commonly associated with HE essay writers identified as dyslexic (memory, reading speed, spelling, maintaining attention in reading, concentration, sentence composition, essay structure). However, of particular interest here, is that the students' perceptions of themselves as writers are not reflected in the difficulties they describe. Feeling positive and enabled is not necessarily associated with lack of difficulty, nor is feeling fragile and undermined

associated with more difficulty. My suggestion is that a focus only on dyslexia related difficulties as a way of understanding essay writing experience is too narrow. Other aspects of essay writing need to be incorporated and we need to understand how all these factors contribute to positive or fragile perceptions and have a role in creating different essay writing experiences. The following section, therefore, examines the data further for these aspects and explores their role in constructing the students' experience of essay writing. This follows through my intention to view the students as 'writers' rather than 'dyslexic'.

4.3 Comparison of students as essay writers

This part of the analysis takes what can be conceived of as vertical slices of the data in order to compare different students within the same category and explore how strengths and fragilities are constructed. Figure 4.2 sets out the framework of the analysis, the basis for which was discussed in chapter 3. Each of the three parts involved in the construction of their self-perceptions is addressed in turn, building a cumulative picture that also incorporates the links between them.

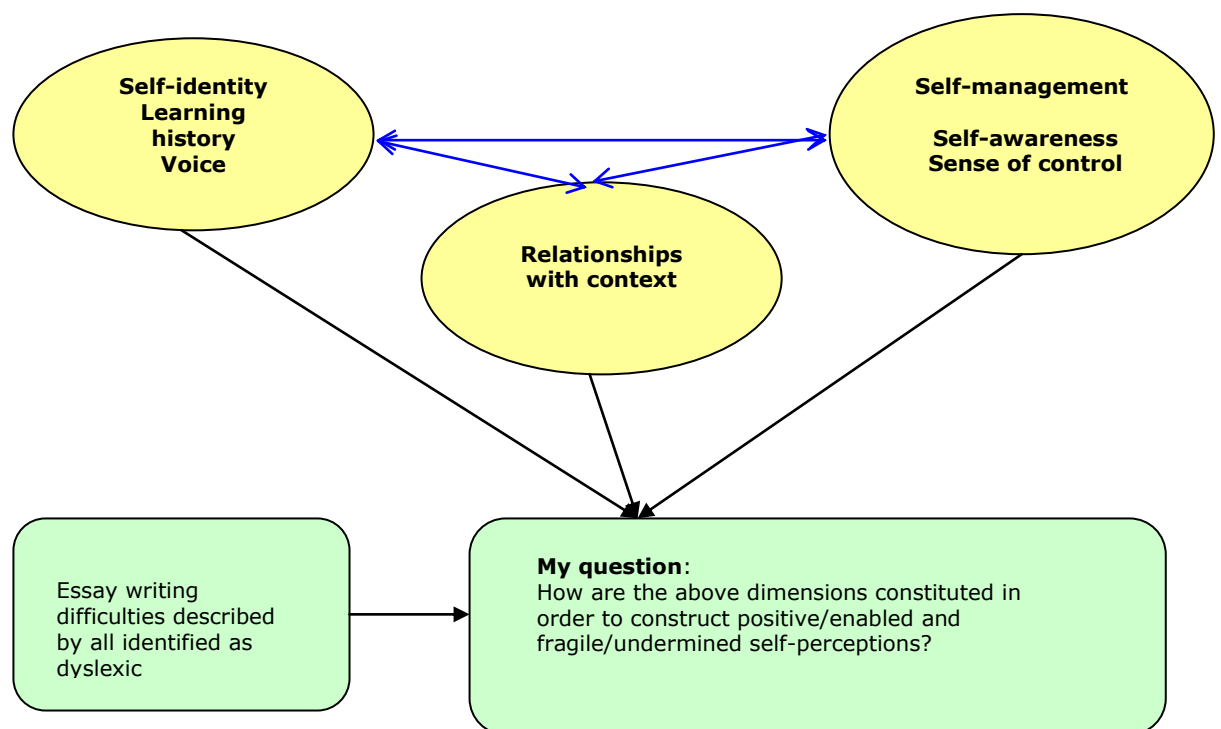


Fig. 4.2: Framework of analysis

(i) Self-identity

This part of the analysis is based on the resources students bring to their writing as suggested by their past experience (Hyland 2009) at school and their prior university experience. This is indicated by their descriptions of previous experience at school and in the early stages of university. It involves their understandings of essay writing and descriptions of preferences and affective responses. The strength of their voice indicates the kind of identity as writers that they aim or are able to present.

Effects of learning history

Learning history encompasses experience of school in terms of enjoyment, sense of achievement, motivation and support from teachers and family. It also includes recent history at university. It cannot be claimed that this is a comprehensive autobiographical account (see Ivanic (1998), for example, who meets her participants in their homes). However, enough information was gathered to allow insights into the students' own perceptions of themselves as learners.

There is some agreement that the social and emotional consequences of school experience of dyslexia can continue into adulthood (Morgan & Klein 2000; Riddick, Sterling, Farmer, & Morgan 1999). This applies to identified or unidentified dyslexia, although identification and its effects are a subject of study in themselves (Armstrong & Humphrey 2009). There are also studies that suggest that sense of well-being can improve in later schooling (Burden 2005). The connections between history and self-perceptions as writers are therefore not straightforward. In order to explore whether learning history might have an impact on their self-perception as writers I reviewed the data on how the students talked about their school experience and compared it with how they described their feelings about learning and writing once at university.

For those not identified as dyslexic, it can be said that their experience of school contributes to their positive identity as writers. All describe achieving well, being highly thought of by their teachers, supported by their parents and strongly motivated to work hard. These attributes continue at university. For those identified as dyslexic, early identification

is considered to be beneficial to future academic success (Riddick 2010). This can be applied to Liam, whose dyslexia was identified at the age of 6 and who has many of the protective factors suggested by Riddick (2010) including effective early intervention, parental support, positive school experience and good academic achievement. The negative effects of lack of identification can be seen for Adam and Suzanne. Adam's belief that he is '*stupid*', arising from his severe early literacy difficulties, leads him to attribute success to chance and this only begins to change once his dyslexia is identified:

At least now I know I'm not just some stupid guy winging it or someone messed up in the marking department.

Suzanne's early experience of unexplained struggle influences her perception that 'teachers' are not helpful. Suzanne did not accept her teachers' belief that she was 'thick' and feels they did not do enough to help her:

C. Did you believe people when they told you you were 'thick'?
S. No I didn't believe them. That was why I changed schools cos they were just..they wouldn't do anything to help me

This also shows difference in attribution style between Adam and Suzanne and supports the recognition of attribution theory as important to dyslexic identity (Burden 2008b).

There are also examples where positive experiences of learning were maintained in spite of unidentified dyslexia. Rob's confidence was maintained by his own and his teachers' belief that he was a '*bright pupil*'. Because of this, dyslexia was never considered in spite of handwriting problems and reluctance to read. Jenny's difficulties were disguised by differences in educational aspirations between her and her peers; she was achieving better than the majority in her learning context, albeit with some extra help, and at the cost of social acceptance:

I wanted to go to a different college to everybody else, which meant that I needed to get higher marks than they did..... It's like I never really enjoyed school that much. I always sat at the front of the class and answered all the questions, which didn't make me many friends to be honest.

Ruth's difficulties with essays were attributed by teachers to '*differences in learning style*'; they gave encouraging advice, did not identify 'problems' and Ruth achieved well. She describes working harder than her friends, but enjoying it. It seems therefore that positive feelings could be maintained in spite of unidentified dyslexia so long as difficulties had not been problematised and students maintained a sense of achievement, even if the sense of achievement was possibly masking difficulties.

In spite of potentially detrimental school experience, Adam has some strongly positive perceptions of himself as a writer. This prompted the exploration of how this might occur. It seemed that the move to university style of learning was important to Adam's positive perceptions. Transition from school to university was therefore explored as a possible factor contributing to self-perceptions as writers. Table 4.4 shows the experience for the students identified as dyslexic.

Student	Effect of transition	Students' comments
Adam	Positive: enjoys independent learning at university	<i>I hated school. Now, it's like here's an essay and off you go. I like sitting in the library working.... I like just being able to sit in the library and just do it.</i>
Jenny	Negative: long term deadlines and the need for independent organisation emphasised difficulties with concentration and created complex emotional barriers for writing	<i>It's mainly just the carrying on with it and actually starting. I'm happy to sit down and write a paragraph but then I get really bored and go off and do something else....I am doing it either the night before or the day it's due in. But like I said I always get quite good marks so I never really bothered about it.</i>
Liam	Continuation: maintains confidence in meeting demands of new environment	<i>So it started off as general independence but I've started to get to grips with the idea of it within an academic framework.</i>
Rob	Positive: prompts change and raises awareness that he does essays differently from others, but he manages this successfully	<i>No one that I know in archaeology or history asks someone to look at their essay to pick up problems.</i>
Ruth	Continuation: grapples with strategies for new environment as she did at school. Perceives it as a shared dilemma.	<i>It's sort of got to lead in nicely to itself, like be a coherent argument, which I think I'm doing, but sometimes I'm not. That's the same as any other student. I'm not at the bottom scale nor at the top, I'm in the middle.</i>
Sophie	Negative: Change of course as not suited to Ancient History. Also disoriented by	<i>I've always been told like introduction had to include the title and 'I am going to explain in this essay..' whereas some</i>

	uncertainty of what expected	<i>lecturers don't want you to do that. They want you to give like a summary of your whole essay in....I dunno it just gets confusing about what exactly they want for an introduction.</i>
Suzanne	Negative: Change from positive experience of writing to negative at university	<i>At college, I got high marks, and then when I came to university, I started getting really low marks, and, it's sort of a bit of a kick really, and it just made me think what am I doing wrong now?</i>

Table 4.4: Experience of transition to university expectations

It can be suggested that a positive or negative experience of the change to university learning contributes to the students' self-perceptions as writers. All three students who experienced the change negatively are categorised as 'fragile/undermined'. Adam's experience also suggests that the effects of change for the positive cannot be underestimated (Armstrong & Humphrey 2009; Burden 2008a).

Confidence in own voice

In the attempt to explore how strengths and fragilities are constructed in spite of difficulty, the focus here is on the confidence that the writers have in presenting an authoritative voice appropriate for their discipline and how strongly they show a sense of ownership of ideas in an essay (Creme & Lea 2009). It is difficult to separate 'self' from 'relationships' and impossible to exclude reference to contextual influences. Voice in writing does not suggest a single 'real' voice, but the capacity and willingness to express thoughts (Barnett 2007) and to take on identities and ways of writing that suggest comfort with surrounding discourses (Hyland 2009).

The data were categorised according to whether it suggested a voice that showed confidence or lack of confidence. Using 'browse code node', each category was surveyed for each of the students and the associated data re-appraised and categorised further. The following patterns emerged as constituting strong or fragile voices.

Interest and enthusiasm

Interest and enthusiasm for their subject was one of the factors contributing to having a strong voice. Ruth, for example, says:

I really like doing work. I'm a real loser in that respect. (laughter) Like I'm happy doing about 11 hours a day in the past three or four days. That's cos I've had to as well, but I quite enjoy it. I really like my subject. I'm lucky in that respect.... I really like it. I'm really happy to read and look for information and I'm already quite excited about one of my essays. That helps. I enjoy doing it. (Ruth)

For Jenny, Sophie and Suzanne on the other hand dislike for writing essays diminishes their sense of enjoyment:

It's a chore. It's a really horrible chore. I just prefer doing the practical stuff. I know essays are always gonna be part of life but I just look forward to finishing them. If I'm honest that's the goal, just to get enough references, get them in... (Sophie)

I don't really like writing. I'd much rather be out in Cyprus digging (Jenny)

I find that I'm just learning what is gonna be coming up in the essay, or what is coming up in the exam and then all the other information is sort of in the background. It feels like I'm only learning half the subject. (Suzanne)

Authoritative on content

A further way in which a strong voice was demonstrated was by the authoritative way in which they could discuss the material. All those categorised as having a positive voice clearly demonstrate knowledge of the material during discussion in the planning interview. Rob, for example, explains the chemical composition of medieval glass and what the problems are in making it. He also feels himself entitled to take an assertive position in relation to this 'outside' (i.e. scientific) topic:

If it's an outside concept, if you are talking about chemical compositions they have to accept that you know that already. You don't have to write about that in the essay.

Those with more fragile voices do not feel in command of the material before they begin writing:

It takes me a long time to understand aspects and it normally clicks half way through the essay, so by that time it's a bit too late to actually get it done, so I'm reading through it, I'm just thinking that bit sounds terrible, that bit's ok.... (Suzanne)

Expressing own opinion

The dilemmas faced by student writers in balancing knowledge of source material with their own ideas are well recognised (Elbow 2000; Hyland 2004), but those with strong 'voices' can do this effectively. They have the confidence to express their own ideas and furthermore show a preference for '*not copying out of books*' (Liam) or writing an essay that was '*not a giant book review*' (Beth,). They feel themselves '*good at making links*' (Rob) and '*trying to look for something which is a little unusual evidence*' (Ruth).

Those with fragile 'voices' feel that they always have to reference and that there is no place for their opinion:

J. I make a point, I find an author who's made that point and I'll stick the name in.

C. Do you feel as though it's your point or the source's point?

J. I automatically assume that I've read it somewhere, therefore it's their point and I've not made it up myself. (Jenny)

Confidence in how writing sounded

Having confidence in how their writing sounded is also a part of having a confident voice. This was revealed in expressions of liking for their writing. Adam says:

A. I like it when I've done it. Especially if it's a good subject, like my underwater essay. I loved that one, that essay. I think it's just cos I spent about four weeks writing it. Afterwards I just felt, you can read that, it's good.

C. You liked the language?

A. Yeah. I liked what I'd said, I liked the way I'd said it.

Those whose 'voices' are more fragile have negative perceptions of how their writing sounds:

I've got just chunks of writing and it doesn't read well or it's not flowing. It's like... (expression of frustration). (Suzanne)

Confidence in writing ability

The students' confidence in their ability shows in the ways they can articulate what they are trying to achieve and in their confidence that they are achieving it:

I think I know how to write a good essay, it's just honing it and getting the right balance of rigorous depth but at the same time independence. (Liam)

Those with less strong voices do not experience this. Suzanne describes her own writing as feeling like a '*jumble of words, just going nowhere*' and Jenny cannot bear to read her work through as she '*assume[s] it is rubbish*'.

Confidence in position as dyslexic

In the discussion of how students come to hold particular perceptions of themselves as writers, we expect their feelings about being identified as dyslexic to play a part because of recognised identity issues associated with the concept (Burden 2005; Pollak 2005; Riddick 2010). The significance of dyslexia to their positive or fragile 'voice' as a writer seems to hinge on their response to having it identified, their understanding of the effects of it and their comfort with the concept. Table 4.5 shows their different responses.

Adam	Begins process of change to self-perceptions as 'stupid' and gives opportunity to address structure difficulties. More comfortable seeking help from tutors. Adopts humour in approaches to tutors and friends (teased about DSA equipment).
Jenny	Difficulty with taking it on. She makes no links between difficulties described and dyslexia
Liam	Dyslexia as 'part of me' and can deal with the effects
Rob	New understanding of past experience and of the reasons why he feels to do essays differently from others. Access to support has positive outcome. Sees as opportunity to access 'reasonable adjustments' and queried essay mark based on dyslexia. Jokes from friends about DSA equipment.
Ruth	Hovers between seeing her writing dilemmas as the same as everyone else's and her structure difficulties as associated with dyslexia. At first felt like an additional, more permanent 'hurdle' to what all students have, but not now.
Sophie	Not aware that some of the difficulties experienced are associated with dyslexia and does not understand how it applies to her.
Suzanne	Explains past struggles and sees it as a new opportunity to address difficulties that she cannot understand

Table 4.5: Different responses to dyslexia

It can be said that having dyslexia identified prompts 'reframing' of past experience (Armstrong & Humphrey 2009:100), which in turn prompts important changes that feed into positive self-perceptions as writers:

*It was because then I had an actual opportunity to go to *** when I'd written an essay and she looked through it with me. I found those sessions were really useful in actually spotting what I was doing..... and just the problems that I do quite a lot I can now start to identify for myself. (Rob)*

I still don't like talking in front of people and that's from being definitely just from having teachers and stuff, I'm not one to put my hand up. It's that fear of just being horribly horribly wrong, just being destroyed, but definitely I think this year knowing it's dyslexia and not stupidity it's a bit of a boost. (Adam)

Rob also notes the advantages of having extra time in exams and describes having an essay re-marked because the tutor was not aware of his dyslexia. For Rob and Adam the role of humour is evident. This is recognised as one of the ways of negotiating an identity when dyslexia is identified (Roberts et al. 2009).

Ruth shows her ambivalence about how much she is the same or different from others:

It's just the way I work I guess. Other friends I know who aren't dyslexic make copious amounts of notes and others I know don't. This isn't just because of being dyslexic, it's just a working process. (Ruth)

Suzanne's response instigates positive change in spite of her fragile self-perceptions:

I've just been having a really good outlook onto this [having her dyslexia identified] and thinking of it as a plus side to my learning.

However, for Jenny and Sophie, having their dyslexia identified does not have this effect. This is partly because their dyslexia was identified comparatively recently and they do not fully understand the effects of it, or in Jenny's case reject it as an influencing factor.

Liam's position is also influenced by early identification and good understanding of how it affects him:

It's just kind of like, what does it mean to me, it doesn't like mean anything separate to me I suppose. It's just part of me and it's part of the way I approach thinking and writing and reading, so it's just part of me. (Liam)

We therefore see variations in response to dyslexia and the complexity of the identity negotiation and re-negotiation that occurs (Roberts et al. 2009). This further impacts on understanding the relationship between their dyslexia and writing problems.

In summary, from the perspective of the 'self' category, differences were evident in:

- the resources students could bring to the writing task,
- the confidence with which they could take up a position in order to have a strong voice in the essay,
- how they currently positioned themselves as dyslexic.

Table 4.6 sets this out in more detail.

SELF AS WRITER	
Constructing positive/enabled self-perceptions	Constructing fragile/undermined self-perceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive school experience even if dyslexia is unidentified • Early identification and appropriate support • Self-belief maintained • Positive experience of transition to university • Interest and enthusiasm for subject • Authoritative on content material of essay • Confident about expressing own ideas and how to incorporate them into the essay • Liking for own writing, or awareness of how it should be • Satisfied with the essay handed in • Comfortable with understanding of dyslexia • Understood the effects and how to deal with it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative school experience, related to unidentified dyslexia • Self-belief damaged • Negative experience of transition to university • Describe strongly disliking writing essays • Struggle to be confident in understanding of content material • Tendency to bury own ideas beneath references or not confident in expressing them • Do not like or are not aware of how writing sounds • Not satisfied with the essay handed in or avoid reading through for fear of it being 'rubbish' • Not yet come to terms with dyslexia: may not yet have had opportunity or may be emotional barriers

Table 4.6: Constructions of 'self as writer'

(ii) Discussion

Resources brought to the writing task

The well-recognised positive effects of early identification and the problems associated with failure to identify were evident. However, the analysis also showed the importance of maintaining a sense of achievement at school whether or not dyslexia was identified. It also showed in Jenny's case how dyslexia might not be evident because of the social context of the school. Nor should the effects of transition from school to university be underestimated: this was seen to generate change from negative to positive experience or vice versa. A further factor was the difference (between Adam and Suzanne) in attribution of failure at school. All of this suggests the complexity of the concept of self-belief and identity as dyslexic and supports those emphasising a more broadly-based view requiring understanding of cultural conditions. The experiences brought to the university setting then interact with varying writing demands and understandings, resulting in positive and negative reactions to writing university essays (Table 4.4).

Having a voice in the essay

Table 4.6 includes suggested dimensions that constitute a positive or fragile voice in the essay. Some of the problems identified are likely to be dyslexia-related. However, there is an interaction with writing dilemmas shared by the general writing population (Ivanic 1998; Lillis 2001; Myers 1999) Figure 4.3 shows the possibilities for this interaction.

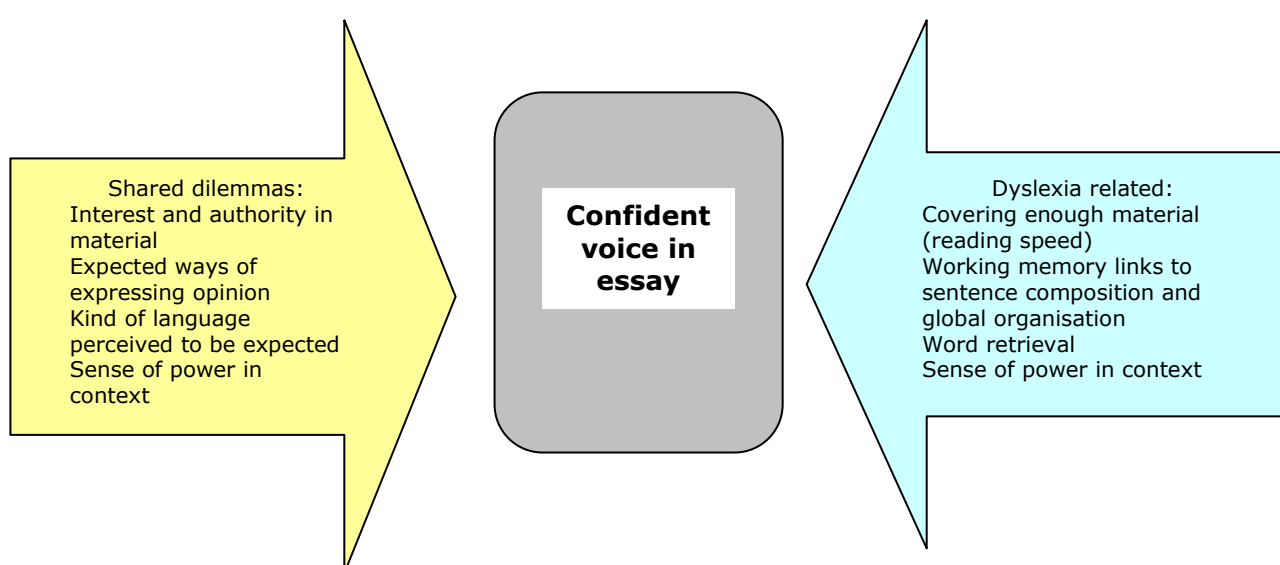


Fig. 4.3: Shared and dyslexia related interactions

For Suzanne, the struggle is covering enough material to be confident about content. For Jenny and Sophie it is related more to having the confidence to express a view and is related to feelings of being powerful or powerless within the context. Therefore whether dyslexia or culture predominates is foregrounded differently for different students. It also relates to how writers are shaped by surrounding powerful discourses (Hall 1997; Hyland 2004).

Position as dyslexic

Findings in table 4.5 suggested the following different positions:

- reframing of past experience
- a new opportunity to address problems
- humour as a tool for negotiating identity
- dyslexia as 'part of me' and can deal with the consequences
- rejection of dyslexia as an explanation of difficulty
- lack of understanding of how it applies
- ambivalence between being the same as or different from non-dyslexic peers.

The diversity in these positions raises questions about the concept of 'dyslexic identity'. It may be more helpful to think of it as an on-going process of negotiation in the face of shifting contextual circumstances and changing understanding (Roberts et al. 2009). The opportunity to gain understanding of dyslexia and perceptions of one's own position as dyslexic in a particular context then affect the confidence of this negotiation. This suggests the importance of developing a route to self-understanding that involves not only metacognition but also a level of self-awareness that Hunter-Carsch (2001) refers to as meta-affectivity.

It is likely therefore that these students are positioned differently, not only from each other, but differently on different occasions as individuals, among these interacting forces. They are negotiating shifting emphases depending on the discipline, the writing task and their previous and current experience of writing and dyslexia. The following section develops the next part of this picture by exploring the influence of relationships with the context.

(iii) Relationship with the context

There appears to be some consensus that essay writing is a dialogic process, even though researchers suggest that the dynamics of it are not explicit (Lillis 2001). Different kinds of voices inhabit writers' minds as they make writing decisions (Bakhtin 1986; Hyland 2004; Myers 1999). These voices influence how student writers understand, for example, what is relevant, the level of detail required, how to argue and use the literature, the language and tone expected. It also influences the positions they choose or are able to adopt in their role as academic writers (Ivanic 1998). There are differences therefore in the kinds of voices that dominate, in the stance towards them and in confidence in response to them (Hyland 2009).

Data were examined for the sources that students drew on to inform their writing decisions and their stances towards them. Figure 4.4 shows the different influencing 'voices' identified. The separation of these voices in figure 4.4 was grounded in the data, though the overall concept of contextual voices was informed by Bakhtin (1986) and subsequent applications of his ideas (Lillis 2003). As shown in table 4.1, the different stances were categorised as concordant, ambivalent, strategic, resistant and alienated.

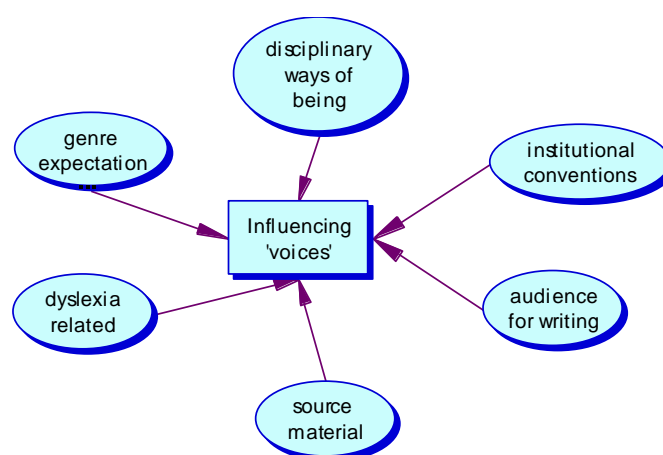


Fig. 4.4: 'Voices' influencing student writers

In this section, I explore how the varied stances towards these influencing 'voices' contribute to the construction of strong/enabled or fragile/undermined self-perceptions. Their stance reflects how they 'hear' contextual 'voices' and in turn how it influences writing decisions. Each is addressed in turn, except for 'source material' which has been partially discussed in the previous section and is addressed in more detail in the following chapter in conjunction with essay texts.

Disciplinary ways of being

The relationship between students' personal values and preferences and those of their discipline are significant. Concordance between these allows Liam to write in ways that suit him:

C. I notice you're using these shortened forms, 'don't' and 'it's' and you're doing it throughout, so it seems very much part of your style. Have you been picked up on that?

L. No. It seems like the majority of the philosophy lecturers, the seminar leaders who mark essays and stuff like that don't really care about your spelling, or words that you choose to use or abbreviations as long as you've got a good argument, or trying to put across a good argument, you're clear about it and you show some kind of independence. So they're assessing you more on what you say and what you think and how you express it, clarity and understanding and stuff like that rather than the other stuff, which is pretty good for me cos I'm not good at that.

This contrasts with the way it is experienced by Ian (not dyslexic), who actively resists the values of his department:

The philosophy that I write and think in the style of doesn't correlate with theirs. I have to rephrase everything in a different way that is slightly alien to me.

The relationship between how they perceive their own language in relation to what they perceive as being 'academic' language was revealing for others also. The concordance showed by Liam is shared by James and Beth (not dyslexic), who both describe the necessary language as '*coming naturally*'.

There was also some ambivalence about this. Ruth expresses dilemmas about how she thinks she should be writing:

I think it's that common misconception that everyone wants to make it really posh and I don't think it always works. I think I need to simplify it.

Rachel's experience as a student not identified as dyslexic also leads to ambivalence and uncertainty. She receives conflicting feedback about her writing style:

Last year I had problems in that they thought my style of writing wasn't academic enough so I had to make a conscious effort to read more of the journals and write in that way..... [and this year] He said I was too convoluted in the way that I wrote..... that I should try and change my writing style so that it was clearer and more succinct. So that affected how I wrote this essay.

In spite of being a very high-achieving student, Rachel remained uncertain about whether this was a general comment or the preference of an individual tutor.

Perceptions of writing as not good enough for the context also lead to alienation and contribute to fragile self-perceptions:

S. *I think mine's a bit basic for university level....*
C. *When you say yours is a bit basic, basic in comparison with what?*
S. *I just don't think mine's on the same sort of level as other people's at uni.*
(Sophie)

Well, it's just sort of colloquial language. It's not, it's like when you're reading books they put in, it's all really sophisticated and large words and things like that whereas mine is short and not very sophisticated at all. (Suzanne)

It is interesting how Adam's positive feelings about his writing as shown above contrast with his negative perceptions of the first draft:

A. *The first draft will be awful. It gets deleted and I do it again. Change the words, thesaurus it.*
C. *In what way does it sound awful?*
A. *Very simple. Simple. It's small child writing. I go back and try and make it sound more university.*

He shares Sophie's underestimation of his own writing, but retains a confidence in his ability to address the difficulty, whereas Sophie does not have this confidence.

Some students were critical of the implicit agendas associated with essay requirements:

R. *It's so subjective the marking, some historians would decide to mark you down and others wouldn't.*

C. *Is that how it feels?*

R. *Yes, it's ridiculous. It's the same with any essay writing they'll have their own opinion about it and they'll also have their own opinion on how an essay should be written. They'll also have their own opinion on what's the most important the grammar or argument or structure. Each one has their own sort of....*

C. *And are you consciously trying to sort out what each one wants?*

R. *Yes, yes definitely. It's just a game. History's a game. You have to figure it out.*

(Ruth)

For those categorised as ambivalent, strengths were not threatened as they were able to draw on other resources to work out what was required:

When I read as well I think I just subconsciously am adopting the style that other historians adopt when they're writing their books and journals. It's more analytical as well I think. (Ruth)

Beth and Rachel also describe using journals and books as a pattern for how to write.

However, students became alienated when this was not possible. Sophie feels powerless in her attempts to address how to be:

S. *And different essays want different things and when I try and do it it just gets red penned anyway.*

C. *What do you think your tutors are trying to do?*

S. *Test you (said rapidly and with feeling) to see if you get it or not*

C. *How does that make you feel?*

S. *That I don't know if I can do it*

Rob's strategic approach has more positive effects; it allows him to act on his understanding of differences between his two subject areas. He says that in comparison with history...

I think I'm more suited to archaeology.....everything in archaeology is interpretation, so you've not got one archaeologist saying well this is what

happened and this is what they did. It's more their ideas, so you can challenge their ideas.

Audience

There are also differences in the ways students 'hear' the 'voice' of the audience for their writing: for some this is experienced as a threat or a challenge and for others not. Those taking a strategic approach have a strong sense of their reader as an assessor and strengths were retained because they were confident and went to great lengths to establish what was expected:

I mean generally with the essays I know it is going to be the tutor who is gonna mark it so it is something that I'm quite conscious about, especially when you've got a lecture on the subject. I've started in the last two years writing the essay before like as early as possible in the term, but then waiting until we have the corresponding lecture because then I wait and see how they structure the lecture and the important points that they bring up. So then I look at my essay again and say well they made a bigger point of this, so I'll expand that section and then maybe reduce another section. I'd say it's one of my main concerns, who is going to mark it. I do tend to tailor it to suit that. Generally with most of my tutors, they've written a book about the subject, so it's obvious, I always use that book. It is that sort of thing I do tend to look at first. (Rob)

Rob's tightly managed approach adds another dimension to the implied derogatory tone in the 'economy of effort' style of learning suggested by Marton and Säljö (1997). For students identified as dyslexic, it might be a valid attempt to manage writing demands in the face of difficulties.

Some do not explicitly identify an audience but this seems not to be problematic:

I would like to think I'm more absorbed in the subject than kind of thinking what mark am I going to get. (Beth)

I never kind of think ok what would someone else say, I'd say ok what's wrong with that, so it's more about the personal development of the idea rather than imagining who I'm talking to I suppose. It's more like talking to myself. (Liam)

I never think this is for this lecturer and he marks hard or he's lenient. I just sort of write it. (Adam)

These students are driven by their interest in the subject and possibly understanding of the genre of academic essays.

In contrast, having little perception of what the reader or marker is looking for is undermining for Sophie:

S. It all depends on the mark at the end of the day. If I get a crap mark then obviously I haven't done it right.

C. Do you have any sense of the mark as you're doing it?

S. I haven't got a clue how they mark it. It's just (raspberry). I just know that 40's a pass and if you get above 60 it's pretty good, but I really don't know how they sort of mark it.

Institutional conventions

The two most salient conventions were deadlines and word count. Meeting deadlines and word count differently influence the decisions students make in their writing. For those with a concordant approach, there is an ability to manage these factors, sometimes leading to refinement of writing strategies. Ruth rethinks how she should interpret essay titles in a bid to be more time effective in note-making:

R. The essays I struggle most with are the ones where I don't look at the structure of the question. I will go off in my own head about what they want because I've looked at the content and not the way it's been phrased.

C. And have you been much more conscious of that with this one?

R. I have...By trying to writing less notes, I'm doing that almost inadvertently.

Liam thinks how he needs to adjust his strategies as the word-count increases:

I think I'm starting to get into writing bigger essays but I think the bigger the essay gets the more I will need to develop [the argument] as I go along cos it seems like to get the depth you have to kind of like build a larger framework... it seems like as the length increases you need to start putting stuff down.

For others, the effects are detrimental. Suzanne is under time pressure to begin writing before she has fully absorbed the material:

It takes me a long time to understand aspects and it normally clicks half way through the essay, so by that time it's a bit too late to actually get it done...

Language is adjusted to cope with word count:

C. Do you normally struggle to get to the word count?

S. Yes. That's why I put in words that don't need to be there. I'll extend a sentence by four or five words when you could just write it without. (Sophie)

Time pressure creates negative emotions:

I automatically assume that they're [my essays] a load of rubbish...The marks that I get imply that they're not completely rubbish but every time I write something I just assume that it's going to be absolutely awful. (Jenny)

I can get distracted. It depends what kind of mind set I'm in.... I work literally better with like two days to go because the pressure is so much you have to go and do it no matter what mindset you're in. (Sophie)

Not that I leave my work, it's just, I have to compensate for the time factor... So the pressure mounts up and I get really stressed with it and when I get stressed I just don't function properly, so I get sort of all edgy and up in the air and sort of ansy with everyone. (Suzanne)

'Voices' of dyslexia

The 'voices' associated with dyslexia are a further influencing factor on constructing positive/enabled or fragile/undermined responses and different kinds of relationships within the context are evident. Different discourses of dyslexia (Pollak 2005) at a national and institutional level (Hurst 2009) were discussed in Part 2 of the literature review. All students had disclosed dyslexia to their departments and all except Jenny¹ had taken up alternative examination arrangements and DSA funding. To some extent, this requires them to take on the label of 'disability' even though the different ways of incorporating dyslexia into who they are as writers (Table 4.5) suggest that for some this would not be their preferred perception. Roberts et al. (2009) suggest this conflict is a recognised phenomenon for students identified as dyslexic in HE.

The key voices identified at a local level (context of situation (Halliday & Hasan 1989)) are academic tutors and providers of support². The

¹ She had no further exam assessments and did not feel she would benefit from DSA.

² Marking policy was considered as an additional 'voice'. During my research, policy changed from ad hoc departmental policies to a cross university policy of no differential marking for coursework. Policy could have been an influence for Suzanne and Rob and Adam, but there was no evidence that it affected efforts to achieve the best standard possible so it was not included.

different experiences of contact with tutors in relation to dyslexia can lead to confidence, confusion or negativity. Rob and Adam had personal involvement with their academic tutors over the identification of their dyslexia and therefore experienced their environment as supportive:

I think it's easier now because when I go asking for help I say to lecturers I don't understand the title to this and if they go, 'Well...', I go 'dyslexic, you gotta help!' (with humour) (Adam)

I've never not identified because I only see the advantages. I don't really think I get looked down upon for being dyslexic. (Rob)

Ruth illustrates the blurred edges between experiences that are dyslexia-specific and those shared by many writers. She feels that tutors do not understand how dyslexia affects her:

Dyslexia is very individual. My dyslexia comes across more in the structure than the grammar, which they [lecturers] would think it is.

But as suggested in the literature she experiences the tacit agendas experienced by many writers:

Well, he didn't say he didn't want to say too much, but he clearly wasn't doing...

I sort of read between the lines when he was talking to me.

In contrast, Suzanne experiences her attempts to ask for help with essays as negative:

That's the thing that I get annoyed with in the fact that I go and I ask my lecturers, well what is the question, and they're not really, it's not that they are not helpful, it's just that they're not giving me enough information.

Part of the support process would be to unpick further what she was really asking of her lecturers.

Voices of 'support'

The role of providers of support is a further influencing 'voice', which is taken on differently by different students. Table 4.7 shows which students access support, from whom and for what reasons.

Student	Source of support	Reasons given
Beth*	Dad	Long sentences Typing errors Time to focus on other things
Adam	Dad Flatmates Student Services	Spelling errors not picked up by other means Lack of flow in essays Strategies for assisting with lack of flow Understanding dyslexia
Rob	Girlfriend Student Services	First stage of correction of punctuation errors. Saves time. Noting of patterns of errors to aid independent correction Understanding dyslexia
Ruth	Dad	Clarifying sentences (often just before deadline) Sometimes clarifying structure
Suzanne	Mum and boyfriend	Grammar, verbal expression of ideas

Table 4.7: Support use. * Students not identified as dyslexic

The study was not designed to investigate the dynamics of support relationships nor does my data allow close analysis of the process. My concern is with the effects of support on the students' approach to writing and on the final essay outcome. The following quotations show the different effects of support:

It's just more that if I don't have someone to check my grammar my expressions become all sort of masked and merried in this tanglement, so he smoothes those out so what I want to say... sort of comes out. (Ruth)

So coming back to when I write an essay now I know where to look for the problems that I do quite a lot. I can now start to identify for myself. (Rob)

*At first I just thought...it's an excuse isn't it. But then after spending some time with ***, and she was looking at some of my work as well.... it was just*

like what is it...this and these, which and witch, and then you start to feel, thank God I'm not totally stupid. (Adam)

S. It just doesn't sound right so I go back and I try and reword it and it ends up me losing the actual integral part of that sentence.... and I can never usually find it again.

C. When you say you are rewording it, what are you doing to do that?

S. Using the thesaurus. If I can't do that I just phone up my mum and go I've got this sentence and I don't know what to do (Suzanne)

We see it being used to improve the accessibility of ideas to the reader, to encourage independent recognition of problems, to reframe self-perceptions, as emotional support when under pressure and as a solution to unresolved problems. Those not using support either did not perceive it as necessary (Liam and those not identified as dyslexic other than Beth) or did not understand how they could use it. Sophie, for example, had a sudden realisation during the planning interview that she could talk to us about her essays.

Table 4.8 summarises how different contextual 'voices' contribute to the construction of 'positive/enabled' or 'fragile/undermined' self-perceptions and to different kinds of relationships with the context. This builds a further part of the picture of how differences between students are constituted.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH 'VOICES' FROM THE CONTEXT	
Constructing 'positive/enabled' self-perceptions	Constructing 'fragile/undermined' self-perceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concordance between personal and contextual values • Concordance between perceptions of own language and that required • Reader was not perceived as a threat • Ambivalence because of implicit agendas not a barrier – found alternative sources of information • Strategic approach to reader as an assessor • Successful management of deadlines, word count • Assertive use of support • Supportive dyslexia 'voices' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary voices experienced as hostile or unclear • Reader perceived as a threatening challenge • Own language not good enough in relation to expectations • Conventions of deadlines and word count are undermining • Uses of support not understood • Dyslexia-associated voices not developed or not acknowledged

Table 4.8: Relationships with 'voices' from context

(iv) Discussion

Relationships between personal and contextual values and beliefs

The analysis suggests how different relationships with the context (concordant, ambivalent etc.) interacted differently with disciplinary expectations. For those categorised as alienated, the expected requirements of essay writing were perceived as inconsistent or unclear. This led them to experience expectations about language and the content of an essay as a threat. This then undermined or misdirected writing decisions. For example, Sophie thought her language too basic, but this was not the case. Suzanne thought hers lacked sophistication.

It was interesting that Rachel (not dyslexic) also experienced uncertainty about language use, but was able to adjust to the change in expectations. Her awareness of her language was strong and the uncertainty originated in the context. The context also influenced Ruth's attempts to create language that was '*too posh*' when she felt she really ought to be trying to simplify. This illustrates how the context generates problems that risk being attributed to dyslexia. It is Sophie's misunderstanding of the context and lack of confidence that creates problems for her and the context that influences Ruth.

Similar interactions with context could be seen in relation to reading: we see Liam finding that 'slow reading' is helpful in philosophy (see Vignettes). This is because emphasis is on close understanding of a few key arguments and counter arguments, but slow reading would be potentially problematic in history or archaeology where credit is given for synthesising a range of literature. This therefore pinpoints interactions that occur at the interface between so-called dyslexic difficulties and literacy requirements that are culturally situated (Wearmouth, Soler, & Reid 2003). It also captures the thinking behind a social interactive model of dyslexia where concepts of literacy and expected standards shape how dyslexia is experienced (Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001).

Deadlines and word count

Deadline and word count requirements had metacognitive, affective and linguistic implications. For some positive adjustments were made to strategies in order to meet deadlines and word count. In contrast, time

pressure affected the use of support and generated anxiety about consistency of quality. Word count requirements also caused unnecessary 'padding' of language.

Audience

Different perceptions of audience affected decisions such as how argument develops and the kind of language to use. For some audience was perceived as a threat and added to uncertainty; others saw it as having a strong influence on what they included in the essay; others had little sense of audience, but were influenced by the arguments within the content. There was a stark contrast between Sophie '*having no idea what they were looking for*' and Rob's strong sense of the marker's preferences and priorities. It is not clear why these differences should occur and suggests perhaps that sense of audience is under-used as a tool for writing development.

'Voices' of dyslexia

The voices of dyslexia at the level of the 'context of culture' were inferred as a possible conflict between identity with 'disability' (implied in the take-up of funding and exam arrangements) and different conceptions at a personal level (Roberts et al. 2009). At the level of 'context of situation', the voices of academic tutors and providers of support were 'heard' differently. For some they contributed to feeling enabled, for others difficulties were indicative of a need for time to adjust to change in identity as dyslexic and as writers. This reflects the suggestion by Elbow (2000) that writing voices change and new voices become assimilated as new parts of the self are tried out.

'Voices of support'

It was apparent that support was being used in different ways and for different reasons by some and not being used by others. The responses highlight a number of avenues for further exploration. Firstly it would be of interest to compare friends/family and student services as the source of support. The use of friends and family appeared to be emotionally 'comfortable', non-challenging and at the precise point of need. Student services support was seen as developing independence and changing self-perceptions. Two students used both kinds of support. This raises questions about the relationship between 'support' at a time of pressure

and the ethos of university support as a joint investigation leading to the development of long term learning and independence. It also questions the effects of time on the support process. There is a tension between what is experienced as a 'short' time between accessing support and handing in the essay and the 'long' time needed to develop independence. In addition, it is important to understand more about the reasons why university support is not accessed. It is too easy to assume it is because of lack of need. The experience in this study suggests that there were students who were probably correct in this judgement, but also there were others whose lack of access was related to their lack of understanding of their dyslexia and/or lack of understanding of their writing difficulties.

In summary, the analysis identified the dimensions of interaction arising from the different ways in which the 'voices' of the context were 'heard'. The following section analyses the final part of the picture set out in figure 4.2. It explores how the students approach dealing with difficulty in terms of their self-management.

(v) Self-management: self-awareness and sense of control

Table 4.2 set out the different dimensions of self-management, including self-awareness, sense of control and the kinds of difficulties perceived. Students' accounts of their essay writing process revealed expected areas of difficulty, but of interest were the different ways of talking about them. In some instances issues were not problematised as 'difficulties', but emerged in the context of how they were dealt with. In others, negative emotions were evident. This is illustrated in the following examples of dealing with spelling and concentration difficulties. Also revealed is the importance of differences not only in metacognitive, but also meta-affective awareness (Hunter-Carsch 2001).

Table 4.9 shows the range of approaches to dealing with spelling.

Students	Feelings	Strategies	Residual issues
Adam	Accepting of quite a marked difficulty and pro-active	Relies on spell check; uses voice activated software for words not picked up;	No strategies for certain re-occurring errors (thought,

		says/sings aloud letter names for some words	though, through and homophones). Asks dad to check these.
Beth*	Confident about spelling ability generally	Relies on dad to spot typing errors so that can focus on ideas	Does not really address reason for being slightly error prone
Ian*	Confident, sees spelling as a strength	Accurate with ease	None
James*	Confident	Accurate with ease	None
Jenny	Bored by correcting spelling. Would be a distraction	Relies on spell check; leaves correction until end	Dislikes reading through, so little awareness of extent of problem. Time a major issue
Liam	Aware that makes errors unless consciously applies strategies, but not problematised as he is confident about sorting it out as a separate issue.	Ignores spelling to focus on ideas; uses previously taught spelling strategies; uses spell check and text-to-speech software, especially where has wrong word (reversion/revision)	None except time taken
Rob	Dislikes having to stop to work out spellings but spelling not a major issue during writing	Uses a different word; relies on spell check; can ignore errors if writing flowing	Cannot spot errors not picked up by spell check
Rachel*	Confident	Accurate with ease	None
Ruth	Positive and pro-active. Does not view spelling as a major problem	Uses spell check; in the past pro-actively learned, especially irregular words; occasionally asks friends	More difficulty with words 'hasn't seen'
Sophie	Positive about spelling ability	Uses spell check but usually only typing errors	None that aware of
Suzanne	Frustrated at not being able to spell. Annoyed by red underlining; she 'should' know	Has to correct as goes along	Negative feelings and need to correct interferes with writing flow

Table 4.9: Students' comments about spelling. * Students not identified as dyslexic

It can be seen how nearly all those identified as dyslexic experience some difficulty, but approach it very differently. It can also be seen that a more severe spelling problem is not necessarily associated with negative emotional consequences.

An example of difference in experience of motivational difficulty can be seen if we compare Adam, and Jenny. Both describe issues with concentration, but Adam is in control and finds productive ways of working whereas Jenny struggles:

A. I can work in the library when I'm reading, but if I'm going to write I go in town to a café or something. Last year I was keeping Starbuck's going... Just cos you can sit there and there's that background noise. You're not just on your own.

C. I wonder what it is about not being on your own.

A. It's just like when I'm on my own, it's just like wondering (doing action of looking over shoulder as if wondering what is going on behind him). It means there's a little bit of distraction so it's not so just work, someone funny's just walked past...being on your own is much worse. I can work and then look out of the window (Adam)

It's mainly just the carrying on with it and actually starting. I'm happy to sit down and write a paragraph but then I get really bored and go off and do something else. (Jenny)

And we later discuss her attempts to change:

J. I've been here three years, it's a bit late isn't it? (laughter) I hope I can. I really really really do try and I sit down to start and just stare at my computer for five hours.

These differences in approach and responses to difficulty raise the question of how they come about. Two factors suggested by the data to be important were 'awareness' and 'sense of control'. The theoretical basis for them has already been discussed in the literature review and Part 2 of the methodology.

Awareness

The concept of awareness includes not only awareness of what the problem areas are, but also how doing something in a particular way addresses the problem. This is shown by Adam in his planning strategy and by Rob in his understanding of his reading difficulties; the affective dimensions are again apparent:

C. How does getting it out on the big piece of paper help you?

A. I think it's the memory. I can always add to it or when I'm writing the essay you've just got, well these are all my points and I've got the plan where I know the key ones I wanna do.... And it's just then when I've got the desk,

the plan, the notes, it's all there and I can just sort of see everything and go mad. (said with anticipation of getting started) (Adam).

I tend to have quite a short attention span when it comes to reading. I've started using, I've got yellow tinted glasses, that was another recommendation in my educational psychologist report and they help me a little bit. I still find I can't sit down for a long time, for long periods of time and just read. The way I do my essay seems to spread the reading out (Rob).

It can also be said that metalinguistic awareness is important and this was evident in the students' ability to articulate their thinking about how they write.

I don't use the words that I write down to help me develop my essay, so I don't think it is construction. I think it's kind of recording what I've thought. It's useful [single words and diagrams as memory joggers] in the way that it kind of reminds me of stuff that I've already constructed, the writing itself is simply, the final product of the writing, is simply me showing someone else what I've thought. (Liam)

I'm now consciously trying to keep my sentences, I mean try and explain things more succinctly (hesitates on word) because I sort of go around the point, but I think I've overcome that now. I'm trying to make it more to the point because I'm aware of it now. (Ruth)

Awareness of the effects of dyslexia was also a factor. The different responses have already been discussed (table 4.5), but it seems that having dyslexia identified changes self-understanding, which in turn changes awareness and hence approaches to difficulties. Adam's tendency to attribute success to chance begins to change with the identification of his dyslexia. Rob's 'reframing' (Armstrong & Humphrey 2009; McLoughlin et al. 2002) also aids his understanding and acceptance of why he seems to work differently from others. Lack of awareness seems to arise in a number of ways. It occurs where the development of strategies is impeded or misdirected because of uncertainty about expectations, as in the situation for Sophie and Suzanne already discussed. It is also undermining where students are successful in assessment terms, but do not understand why. For Jenny, her marks are in some ways surprising with an underlying sense of markers' foolishness in not seeing through her:

That was the one I did the night before. I started it at midnight and handed it in at nine o'clock the next morning and I did the reading the night before as well. I don't know what happened, but I got 65% for it. (Jenny)

There are two further dimensions of awareness that have negative effects. One is where awareness is strong, but the capacity to deal with the difficulties is limited. We can see this in Suzanne, who is aware of problems, but overwhelmed by her inability to address them. The other dimension is where productive strategies are being applied, but are not recognised as such; recognition of their positive effects is overtaken by other seemingly more burdensome problems and further shows how lack of awareness of context misdirects efforts:

C. This reads very well. You sounded really lacking in confidence about your writing when we were talking about it, but it reads very clearly and you sound as though you know what you're doing with it.

S. I just want to pass. Like last year I didn't get very good marks on some of them and it just puts you off and I need to do well now if I want to get a decent degree. Certain marks if I get below them, I'm not very happy in myself (Sophie)

Sense of control

It is clear that 'awareness' is a necessary part of 'sense of control'. As discussed above, the tendency for difficulty to emerge in the context of the solution to it suggests control. However, having a sense of being able to control the writing task and one's own responses to it involves additional aspects. Firstly, some seem confident to experiment with solutions (these were categorised as 'solution finders'). They are willing to adapt in response to changing self-understanding and/or contextual requirements. Liam's awareness of the need to change strategy as the word count increases has already been illustrated. We see Ruth adapting her strategies because of increasing time pressure in the third year:

In the first and second year, I'd just get the essay title, and just read the books on the reading list, but I found that I would just be reading stuff that maybe wasn't necessary and making stupid amounts of notes in fear that I'd forget something. So what I've done this year is try to think about the essay title and what it wants and then look for that information, so that really sort of helps me streamline what I'm looking for as opposed to just reading books.

We also see Adam experimenting with new software and strategies to improve structure:

*I've just started using One Note on the computer and it's just cool. Using that for the last essay I just did was really good. You can just write everywhere. I've just collected all my notes and when I've done a draft or something, the scissors are out and I cut out the paragraph... That's the quickest way for me to sort out if something flows. Cos I often get this you know doesn't flow. I've stopped doing that now, cos **** said to ask if I can do titles. And I've started doing that.*

Secondly, 'sense of control' was not only engendered by the ability to be 'solution finders', but also by the capacity to 'create a comfort zone'. Students describe working in particular ways in terms of likes and dislikes or because it makes them 'feel better' or 'more comfortable'. Adam's way of dealing with his concentration difficulties has already been illustrated. In spite of what seem to be severe difficulties with keeping on task, he finds 'comfortable' ways of dealing with them. Rob describes the reasons for his way of working:

I like to actually start writing it as soon as possible rather than reading all the references..... I just feel a bit more comfortable in myself, that I've actually got something written down. And also it does spread the reading out a bit, cos I'm not one that goes and sits in the library and reads all day.

Liam describes how he deals with the 'good day/bad day phenomenon:

I find it impossible to pace myself but I kind of like, it sounds a bit silly but I get into a zone, so I might spend a weekend sitting around doing everything I can to distract myself, thinking I should be doing this work, but let's watch 7 hours of DVDs or something stupid like that and then go out. So I waste quite a lot of time, but when I know that I can do it I can just do it. I can sit for 6, 7 hours continuously writing it down and then looking at it.... It's the same for reading...

This further illustrates the interaction between meta-affective and metacognitive factors and how both levels of awareness are important for the construction of positive writing perceptions.

Fragile 'sense of control' is strongly influenced by lack of awareness or lack of strategy and hence also lack of ability to 'create a comfort zone'.

It is possible that there is a chain of interacting factors as suggested in figure 4.5.

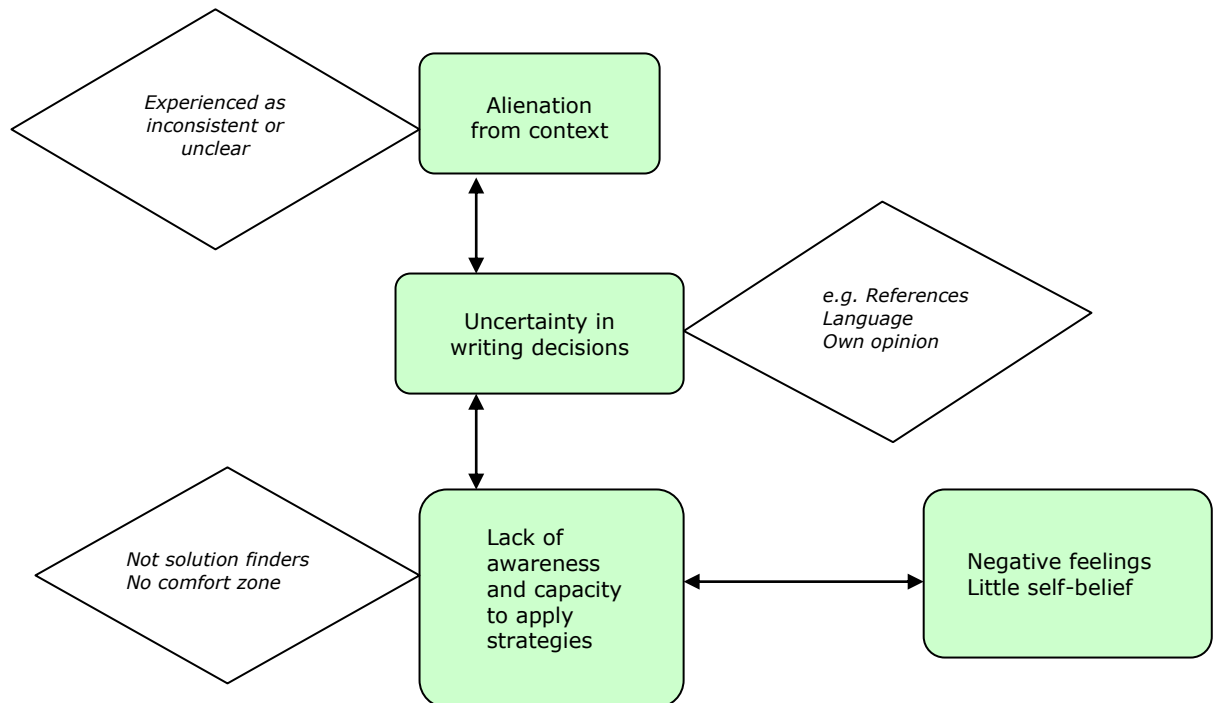


Fig.4.5: Chain of interacting factors

These are portrayed as two-way interactions as it is not possible to be certain about starting points.

However, lack of 'comfort zone' does not always arise from the absence of strategies. Sometimes it seems that a strategy is successfully applied, but negative emotions remain. This is because the strategy is costly in terms of time and/or emotional investment. Because of time pressure Ruth uses her dad's support in a way she knows not to be ideal:

He doesn't just do it for me. He sends them back on that Auto-correct and then makes me look through them. (Tone of mock irritation). He won't just do it. Usually I don't look at them I just click ok, cos by that point it's got to be in like 8 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Adam's attempts to deal with 'flow' are stressful:

I don't think I'm ever sure about it [flow]. That's why I get other people to check it. I do change things around afterwards, that goes better there, but then other people will say that doesn't do it at all, so I have to change it round..... This is the day before. It's like aaaaagh, cut/paste

Table 4.10 summarises 'self-management' as the third and final part of analysis of how self-perceptions are constituted.

SELF-MANAGEMENT: AWARENESS AND SENSE OF CONTROL	
Constructing 'positive/enabled' self-perceptions	Constructing 'fragile/undermined' self-perceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of problems and knowing why strategies work • Ability to articulate own thought processes about writing • Confidence to experiment with solutions • Flexibility in response to context change • Capacity to create 'comfort zone' • Dyslexia awareness as prompt to change in self understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of strategies impeded or misdirected by lack of understanding of requirements • Not understanding reasons for success • Awareness without productive strategies • No recognition of productive strategies • No awareness and/or no strategies leads to lack of 'comfort zone' and lack of control • Strategies experienced as costly even if successful

Table 4.10: Self-management: awareness and sense of control

(vi) Discussion

The analysis of self-management revealed differences involving not only metacognitive, but also meta-affective and metalinguistic factors. In terms of meta-affectivity, there was evidence of differences in capacity to experiment with solutions and achieve a comfortable personal and environmental space for writing. In terms of meta-linguistic awareness, some were more aware of their own writing than others and could articulate how and why they wrote in the ways that they did. Lack of sense of control could further be seen to link to negative relationships and a struggle to understand expectations (fig. 4.5).

This concludes the analysis of the three areas of the coding framework as set out in figure 4.1. In this analysis the focus has been on viewing the experience these writers bring to their essays, how they relate to the context of them and how they manage themselves during writing.

However, to avoid the risk of not paying enough attention to the effects of dyslexia it is necessary to consider more explicitly the possible constraints of dyslexia itself. In the following concluding discussion therefore, I discuss this further and draw together the current stage of overall findings.

4.4 Concluding discussion to first part of analysis

Research suggests that differences in the genetic and neurological substrates of dyslexia pre-dispose differently towards different outcomes, and are also influenced by cultural and environmental factors (Frith 1999; Paulesu et al. 2001). It is therefore useful to consider how far dyslexia related differences might contribute to these different experiences. I discuss possible constraints of dyslexia from four perspectives: the usefulness of notions of severity; differences in dyslexic profile based on the students own descriptions; connections with working memory limitations; and relationships between dyslexia and different kinds of learning.

(i) Severity of dyslexia

The possibility was considered that differences occur because of differences in severity of dyslexic difficulty. However, on balance, this does not seem a helpful line of thought. The concept of the severity of dyslexia is fraught with problems. In spite of attempts to construct a psychometric methodology to identify mild, moderate or severe dyslexia (Turner 1997), judgements about severity rely largely on contextual markers of the differing effects of dyslexia. The demise of discrepancy definitions bring psychometric approaches further into question (BPS 1999; SpLD Working Group 2005). It is not helpful to define 'severe' dyslexia as a large discrepancy between attainment and cognitive ability scores. Singleton (1999) attribute the difficulty with the concept of severity to the heterogeneity of dyslexia, which is manifest in different ways in different individuals and we might add in different contexts. Attempting to isolate specific cognitive features as being more severe and having a direct influence on specific aspects of essay writing is unlikely to be productive.

(ii) Feature of dyslexic profiles as described in accounts

Even if it is not helpful to think of difficulty in terms of severity, it is possible that particular features of a dyslexic profile, or combinations of features, make some students more susceptible to difficulty with essays than others. A number of features were considered in this light based on the premise that they were strongly present in the descriptions (and sometimes my observation of behaviour) of some, but absent in others. Examples are word-finding, concentration, and the 'good day/bad day' experience.

Word-finding problems seem a strong candidate for difficulty if we consider the discussion in the literature review of connections to theories of dyslexia and implications for writing. Word-finding difficulties are likely to affect generating ideas, translating into language and composing sentences. However, contextual dimensions still remain. Suzanne's word-finding difficulty is complicated by her search for 'sophisticated' words; similarly with Adam's attempts to move from 'small child' to 'university' writing. This discussion is revisited in the following chapter after analysis of essay texts.

In terms of concentration difficulties and 'good day/bad day', what appear to be quite severe difficulties are being resolved by some and not by others. Adam resolves concentration difficulties but Jenny does not. Liam resolves 'good day/bad day' experiences, but Suzanne does not. We cannot know whether this is because of variation in severity or because life and learning experiences and interactions with others predispose some to resolve difficulty and others not. A further possibility is that co-occurring unidentified SpLDs are present, but it seems that identification of them would not change these situations. Based on the evidence here, a bigger picture of learning difficulty is supported, as suggested in notions of ABD (Gilger & Kaplan 2008) and a view of co-occurring difficulty as multi-dimensional over the life-span (Hulme & Snowling 2009). It seems more helpful to think of difficulty as created by a network of interacting and intervening factors and to identify the key features of them in specific circumstances.

(iii) Effects of working memory

The inefficiencies of working memory in dyslexia and their effects in writing were discussed at some length in the literature review and it has to be assumed that these effects are present in these writers. Composing sentences or deciding on text organisation involves simultaneous judgements about language choice, relevance, syntax, argument etc., and there is clear possibility for cognitive overload where inefficiencies are present. Many of the suggested strategies for essay writing and for the use of software aim to alleviate this overload. However, again it is difficult to make a uni-dimensional link between cognitive overload and particular essay writing difficulties. Contextual concerns are still involved. For example uncertainty and anxiety about the contextual requirements increase cognitive load still further. If in cognitive terms writing is perceived as a problem solving, goal setting process (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1987), contextual uncertainty leads to not knowing what goals to set. It also interferes with the development of appropriate intramental states for making writing decisions (Ivanic 1998). This impedes the development of stable schemata (Johns 1997) and hence metacognitive awareness and control. Again it seems preferable to think about the effects of working memory as interacting and intervening processes.

(iv) Dyslexia and kinds of learning

It seemed that some students were more able than others to absorb writing requirements and those categorised as 'ambivalent' were able to draw on alternative sources where departmental requirements are perceived as unclear. A further question from this perspective relates to whether dyslexia in itself generates barriers to absorbing implicit information from the context. There have been suggestions that the dyslexic population may have difficulty with particular kinds of learning, including dealing with implicit procedures (Nicolson & Fawcett 2008; Vicari, Finzi, Menghini, Marotta, Baldi, & Petrosini 2005). This suggests that dyslexia may be a factor in the understanding of essay writing requirements. However, researchers from an academic literacies perspective provide evidence that this as a cultural problem in the academic setting, that these dilemmas are shared by all students

because of implicit agendas disguised beneath a culture of transparency (Lillis 2001; Turner 1999). Again therefore it is not possible to separate features of dyslexia from the context.

Overall, this first part of the analysis has mapped out in some detail the interacting processes at work. All those identified as dyslexic included in their accounts descriptions of what are generally agreed to be dyslexia-related difficulties with essay writing. However, the process of writing an essay generated different responses that were not reflective of the difficulties they described. The analysis suggests how these different responses are shaped. This was done from three perspectives: 'the self', 'relationships with the context' and 'self-management' and the different dimensions in each perspective were identified. This adds to the students' own descriptions of difficulty and what the literature tells us about connections with dyslexia. It is this contextual detail that has so far been missing from our understanding of dyslexia and essay writing. In terms of understanding differences in essay writing experience, I suggest that the addition of this detail reveals different individual and interacting dimensions. All of the dimensions identified have been set out in tables 4.6, 4.8 and 4.10. All of them do not apply to all of the students. However, selecting those that apply to individual writers begins to map differences.

In the following chapter this mapping of individual differences is taken further. My intention to adopt a methodology that considers the 'how' and the 'what' of essay writing (Gubrium & Holstein 2000) is partially complete. This chapter focused on the 'how', on how the students perceived themselves as writers and how their perceptions were constructed. The following chapter focuses on the 'what', what the students do in terms of strategy and in the production of the final written outcome.

Chapter 5: Analysis Part 2

Strategies, plans and essay texts

In the previous chapter, I suggest dimensions of difference in how the students identified themselves as writers, how they related to the context and how they managed themselves and their writing. The individual combinations of these dimensions allow possible mapping of difference in essay writing experience. The next stage in answering the research question focuses on what the students do in their attempts to write the kinds of essays they understand to be required. As discussed in the literature review, my focus here is on strategies and on coherence of texts at global and local levels. This is according to the example of Ivanic (1998), the model of coherence suggested by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and ideas about argument suggested by Andrews (2010). I also include some analysis of so-called transcription errors in order to understand the effects on writing as a whole. What the students do is of course strongly linked to their understandings and positionings suggested in the previous chapter.

My purpose is to continue to map the basis of differences between these writers. To do this, I explore differences in the strategies applied to developing global and local coherence and differences in plans and evolving and final texts. Four of the eleven students describe this area as problematic. (Jenny is categorised as 'unknown' because of her difficulty with reviewing and analysing her own writing). It will become apparent that the reasons for this are very different. I am therefore interested in what constitutes being enabled or limited in this respect and what the differences are between these writers. In this part of the analysis, this does not rely totally on the students' own perceptions. Because the essay texts are available, my own judgement about coherence is involved and I am open to the possibility that the students' judgements about their success or failure in this aspect may not be apparent in their texts.

This part of the analysis is based on the data coded under 'Strategies' (see Methodology Part 2, Fig. 3.4b). This includes the categories of 'Developing argument and structure'; 'Using the literature'; 'Use of title';

'Achieving appropriate language'; 'Planning'; and 'Drafting'. My assumption is that all of these are involved in developing global and local coherence, but coding them separately reveals more detailed dimensions. Terminology is problematic here as I am aware that in the interviews I use terms that are most amenable for the students and I take up their terminology. Terms such as argument, structure, line of thought, flow and coherence therefore are used interchangeably during the interviews. The code of 'Achieving appropriate language' is also problematic. Under this code, I originally considered using Ivanic (1998) as a model to establish whether the language writers use suggests identity with the values of academic discourse. However, in the event, this does not address the issues that arise in the essay texts, mainly because the analysis by Ivanic (1998) of word use and sentence construction is not concerned with communication breakdown or difficulty. I therefore focus more on models of information structure suggested by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) in conjunction with the students' accounts. The codes for spelling and grammar are sub-categories of 'Developing appropriate language'.

The chapter is divided into three sections:

- How different strategies for achieving coherence contribute to being enabled or limited in this respect
- Differences in written plans
- Evolving and final essay texts

Each section includes discussion of issues arising from the analysis.

5.1 Strategies for achieving coherence

(i) Overview of strategies

Firstly, I survey the above codes to examine how the students describe their strategies. Their descriptions are summarised in table 5.1.

Student	Summary of descriptions
Adam (archaeology)	Flow; blocks of information; using 'titles'; step by step round the mind map according to 'importance'. References, sentence beginnings of key points in reading are all on large colourful mind map.

Beth* (archaeology)	Break down title into definite points; continuing to read while writes and incorporates new ideas; uses sub-headings, which are gradually eliminated as links become clear; links eventually 'click' like a game of tetras; 'light bulb moment'; notes and plans evolve as writes; scribbles notes on reading. Uses mind map to sort out order, both at macro and micro levels
Ian* (philosophy)	Use philosophical arguments as the structure. Interrelated 'cloud of ideas' that also relate to one thing. A rational order that gradually falls into place like a jigsaw, a paragraph can only fit in one place. Building bridges to get from one argument to another. No notes or plans. Works by having a number of electronic documents open at once. Recognises that might be different if has to write longer essays
James* (archaeology)	Aims to create flow that has a structure; introduce question, analyse the evidence; move from one point to another; link in head and then write. Detailed colour coded notes with post-its for references for relevant sections of literature.
Jenny (archaeology)	Always writing immediately before the deadline and sometimes reading also; puts title in introduction to aid clarity of where the essay is going (but thinks not supposed to do this); underlines key words in title; reads and identifies key points; writes paragraph by paragraph and gradually reorders and pieces together. No notes; no plans.
Liam (philosophy)	Puts forward 'disparate points' and draws together in argument. Essay is a re-creation of the picture of the arguments that is already formed. Becomes 'one big thing that pulls the reader along'. No written plan. Keeps in head like a so doku puzzle. Any notes are memory joggers to aid understanding of a concept. Consist of rough diagrams rather than words. Recognises that strategy may change if have to write longer essays
Rachel* (history)	Build-up of causative factors, very structured with links between paragraphs, constructing the argument throughout the essay, interpretation not facts. Every paragraph has a point. Detailed colour coded notes and detailed spider diagram showing each section and paragraphs within it.
Rob (archaeology)	Write in sections and gradually add further points as reads; change order as necessary; include linking paragraphs; aims not to have 'ideas crossing over'; where possible selects titles that suggest structure. Notes and essay in one document. Different sources in different colours and change to black when used. No plan.
Ruth (history)	Intro, set paragraphs and conclusion; 'nice and streamlined'; 'a coherent argument, presenting evidence and discrediting it'; 'wobble paragraphs about' from the plan until it is coherent. Things 'pop out' and have to be incorporated. Copious detailed notes with a plan suggesting structure, but not fully formed; emerges partly as writes. In process of changing approach to try to reduce quantity of notes.
Sophie	Tries to make 'point, discussion and comment' in each paragraph.

(archaeology)	Collects quotes; handwrites these on one side of A4; cuts up and categorises; handwrites essay in chunks, but aware that needs to link. Incorporates this as types up. Makes some handwritten notes on content. Has papers and source material spread out for easy reference.
Suzanne (archaeology)	Beginning, middle and end with bullet points in each section. Starts writing where has enough 'information' and gradually builds essay. Feels need to link ideas more, but cannot express links verbally. Makes handwritten notes and colour codes according to topic.

Table 5.1: Summary descriptions of strategies

*** students not identified as dyslexic**

(ii) Further interrogation

These descriptions were then surveyed further. Most striking were the subtle differences amongst all the students. However, two overarching approaches could be identified. These can be encapsulated in the E. M. Forster quote: 'How do I know what I think till I see what I say' (Forster 2005:99), and the converse quoted in Taylor (1989:1): 'How do I know what I'll say till I see what I think'. For those following the former pattern, developing argument is interwoven with the act of writing:

When I've tried to have the whole idea like the whole thing written before it's written if you know what I mean it doesn't go as easily. I like to be quite open as to where it can go and how I'm going to write it, so I prefer to write it and add bits. (Rob)

For those following the latter, the whole argument has to be worked out before they can begin. Writing is then the exposition of their thinking:

There's no point in me writing stuff down if I haven't already worked out what I'm gonna write down I suppose. I don't see the essay writing as something developmental, I see it as that's what I come up with at the end. (Liam)

The data in table 5.1 were then examined in three ways to find:

- Whether the two overarching categories discussed above have a role in predisposing to success or struggle in achieving coherence;
- Whether there are any particular strategies that seem more effective than others
- Whether there are factors common to all approaches that determine success or struggle?

Do the two overarching categories in themselves have a role in predisposing towards success or struggle?

The data were explored for strategies adopted within each category and whether students considered themselves to be enabled or limited in this aspect of essay writing. Table 5.2 shows the findings.

	'How do I know what I think till I see what I say?'		'How do I know what I'll say till I see what I think?'	
	Strategy	enabled limited	Strategy	enabled limited
Adam	Organise under headings	limited		
Beth*	Organise under headings	enabled		
Ian*	Write to articulate links and finalise order	enabled		
James*			Whole line of thought pre-formed: linear development	enabled
Jenny	Organise as sections or 'blocks of information'	not known but text suggest limited		
Liam			Whole line of thought pre-formed: holistic	enabled
Rachel*			Whole line of thought pre-formed: linear development	enabled
Rob	Organise as sections or 'blocks of information'	enabled		
Ruth	Write to articulate links and finalise order	towards being enabled		
Sophie	Organise as sections or 'blocks of information'	Felt limited but may be more successful than recognises		
Suzanne	Organise as sections or 'blocks of information'	limited		

Table 5.2: Strategies within overarching categories. * Students not identified as dyslexic

The overview of strategies suggests that in these cases the two overarching categories do not in themselves explain being enabled or

limited. My questioning alludes to whether these categories might map onto holistic or analytic approaches as difficulties for students identified as dyslexic are sometimes characterised by a conflict between holistic preferences and analytic essay requirements (Cooper 2009). However it is apparent that there are holistic and analytic strategies within each category and with varying outcomes. It was also noted that all those not identified as dyslexic felt enabled. I would argue that no significance should be attached to this. Some of the students who are identified as dyslexic share similar strategies and are also successful. It may be an indicator of the nature of the non-dyslexic group.

Are there any particular strategies that seem more effective than others?

In this part of the analysis I explore whether particular strategies can account for success or struggle. I also include more detail here of planning, reading and note-making. When categorising the students' responses to interview questions about reading and note making, there was a separation between purpose and management, i.e. what they were trying to achieve in their reading and how they recorded their reading and revisited notes. Table 5.3 sets out their strategies with this in mind.

	Pre-writing plan	Reading		Note making	
		purpose	management	purpose	management
Adam	A3 mind map with headings, references and markers for finding key points in reading. Arrows showing order	Careful gathering of detail from archaeological record	Key points and references on mind map. Begins writing before reading is finished	Quick recording of important information sometimes using voice activated software. Mind map with some ordering according to importance.	Grouped according to site. Referred to notes and books as writing essay
Beth*	Has early bullet points and mind maps, but these change as reads more and as order and links develop	Seeking links and overall line of thought as reading develops. Reads extensively.	Photocopies are re-read several times and annotated. Begins writing before reading is finished.	Maps and re-maps possible order of ideas as reads more, but also writing essay	No final overall order. Begins writing from photocopies and possible headings.
Ian*	No pre-writing plans	To identify arguments and counter arguments related to the title	Several electronic files open simultaneously behind essay document. Switches	No notes	

			between them		
James*	Bullet-pointed plan with ordered points. Order evolves as reading develops.	Information gathering and testing of links and structure suggested by title	Extensive reading, done before writing.	Record detail with clear reference for retrieval from sources. Structure noted as reads	Colour code notes to tie in with bullet points in plan. Post-its with references for each section
Jenny	No pre-writing plans. Writes introduction first to give direction to essay	Reads according to the topics suggested by title.	Covers good range of sources, but very selective of relevant sections. Begins writing before reading is finished.	No notes. Writes directly from source material	Strategies driven by pressure of time
Liam	No pre-writing plans	To identify and evaluate arguments and counter arguments.	Close re-reading to gain in-depth understanding. Gets into a 'zone' after periods of distraction. Reading done before writes	Visual representation of concepts to aid memory while works out arguments	Notes discarded. Not referred to when writing. Not part of structure of argument.
Rachel*	Detailed spider diagram showing global framework of essay and also sections and sub-paragraphs and order	Reading to discover framework of argument and linking points that address the title.	Extensive reading. 'Covers all the bases' to gain a complete picture of the field. Can read quickly and effectively. Does all reading before writes	Detailed notes with emphasis on structures that emerge from reading	Colour coding of notes according to sections in spider diagram
Rob	No pre-writing plans	Gathering information and testing points and links that fit framework suggested by title and lectures.	Careful pacing of reading. Reads key text, begins writing, and then gradually reads and writes simultaneously to build essay	Mainly content based notes	Notes typed with different coloured fonts for different sources. Essay written in same document and notes changed to black when used in essay
Ruth	Bullet pointed plan, but order not fully formulated	Looking for different arguments from different historians and evaluating how they address the question	Needs to write notes as reads. Maintains attention and aids memory. Does most of reading before writing.	Mix of recording of others' ideas and own thoughts.	Copious notes which feel unmanageable. Not all relevant. Trying to reduce and be more focused on title, but writing aids reading
Sophie	Sketchy bullet points. Key quotes from reading noted, cut out and juggled around to decide order	Gathering information. Seeking clues to confirm or deny possible interpretations of title	Books open at key points all around her. 'Match across different sources'. Prefers reading web format – information easier to see, locate and	Some notes but refers directly to books.	First stage of essay is handwritten in sections that eventually come together to form sections of the essay.

			compare.		
Suzanne	Sketchy bullet points in each of 'beginning, middle and end'	Information gathering. Tries to choose essay where topic is already familiar to manage reading time.	Reading according to topic. Then begins writing where has enough material	Some content notes. Refers to books as writes. Colour codes according to section of essay	Handwrites notes. Slow as handwriting is illegible at speed. Typed notes look like 'blocks' and cannot take in

Table 5.3: Summary of planning, reading and note making strategies

*** Students not identified as dyslexic**

Analysis suggests that, for these students, whether or not they make notes and plans, whether they are visual or linear are not deciding factors in whether they are enabled or limited. Table 5.4 illustrates the range of pre-writing planning strategies and the different outcomes.

Planning strategy	Number of students using	Enabled or limited
No pre-writing plans	4	3 enabled 1 unknown, but texts suggest limited
Pre-writing global map	1	Limited
Mind mapping at global and paragraph level before and during writing	1	Enabled
Spider diagram showing linear progression	1	Enabled
Detailed bulleting of main points and paragraph order	1	Enabled
Detailed bullet points. Order uncertain	1	On point of change towards enabled
Sketchy bullet points	2	Limited

Table 5.4: Pre-writing planning strategies

Similarly, the style and approach to note making and whether or not they were interleaving reading and writing seemed to have no bearing on whether the students felt enabled or limited. It seems therefore that, on the evidence of this sample, it is not differences in the style of planning or note-making that predisposes towards feeling enabled or limited. However, closer consideration of the purpose of plans, and the purpose of reading and notes and reasons for choosing particular ways of working suggest possible connections with enabling or limiting factors.

Are there factors common to all approaches that are enabling or limiting?

The data on the students' purpose behind their strategies were surveyed further. Enabling and limiting factors were identified in two ways: firstly those that contributed to coherence at a global level of the essay and secondly those that contributed to coherence at sentence and paragraph level. It was possible to identify factors that contributed to coherence irrespective of how plans looked or were created.

(iii) Global level factors

First, some students use the title as a guide to the structure of the essay and others did not:

As I say it was an essay that I picked because it had a clear structure that came to me in the title and pretty much I think I stuck to that... (Rob)

If it's very focused in its title and there's a clear structure to it then I find it much easier to write for because it's already laid out for you. (Rachel)

The essays I struggle most with are the ones where I don't look at the structure of the question. I will go off in my own head about what they want because I've looked at the content and not the way it's been phrased. (Ruth)

Adam on the other hand understands the title as a list:

For this one 'what is the evidence...' it's almost a list. It was quite easy with this...just most important...next...next...next.

Jenny focuses on content rather than structure:

C. *I notice you've got some words in bold [in title]. What's the significance of that?*

J. *They're what I'm going to base each paragraph on.*

C. *....So there's a section on each of those is there? How does that work?*

J. *I'll write about each one not necessarily in order and then just kind of fit them in to the essay. That's what I've decided to do anyway.*

C. *As you're writing the essay will you think of them as just completely separate sections.*

J. *Yes, kind of, I think that'll be easier.*

Sophie struggles to understand the meaning of the title:

Yeah it's just the wording of them that I don't really understand sometimes what they're actually asking and need to do.
No questions ever straightforward. None of the ones that they ask is ever straightforward. That's the way I feel anyway.

Second, the purpose in planning, reading and making notes focuses on links and order for those who feel enabled. The three students using what seem to be detailed planning approaches were further compared. Beth (not dyslexic) uses mind maps throughout the writing of the essay to clarify links between concepts at global and paragraph levels of the essay:

For big ideas, and kind of paragraph size ideas I draw a picture and then have all the points I want to make and then when they're down as a picture you can sort of see an order.....
At the same time I'm working by my mind maps, cos a lot of where I put things on mind maps are actually what the links are.

Rachel uses a detailed spider diagram (though in a linear way) to work out global and paragraph level structure before she begins writing:

I read through all the research that I'd done and started to compartmentalise different ideas in my head. As soon as I thought of quite a distinct category that I wanted to address in a certain paragraph I noted it down..... I tried to form a logical progression so I've numbered each of them.

Both these students therefore focus on links and structure in their planning. Adam's focus, however, is less oriented towards structure and more towards holding all the information necessary for the essay in one place:

For the bigger essays, 3000 words, I get a big bit of paper and do the biggest diagram, cos it's fun, felt tips and stuff. Once I've got that I can say that links to that, those two are together. I've got some reading on that, I haven't got much reading on this....
And it's just then when I've got the desk, the plan, the notes, it's all there and I can just sort of see everything and go mad. (Not said with frustration, but in anticipation of getting started)

Third, it was noted that a number of students were interleaving reading and writing, but some were using the strategy productively whereas for

others it was a response to time pressure. For Beth, it allows links between ideas to emerge and change as her reading develops:

B. *Every time I go through the essay more ideas get linked in.*

C. *Is that new ideas coming in, or are you noticing links between what you've already got?*

B. *Links between the reading I've already done, but it depends on how much reading I've already done before...cos I'll read all the way through an essay.*

Jenny 's process is different, but with the same purpose:

But that did involve a lot of cutting and pasting and kind of typing a paragraph from one article and reading another article and typing any points from that and then working out where best to fit them in through the whole essay.

However, Suzanne's reason is related to the reading she has covered and to pressure to start writing:

C. *do you start at the beginning?*

S. *I start where I know most about.*

Fourth, a number of students used headings or wrote the essay as separate sections, but their purpose was different. Beth uses them as starting points for developing abstract conceptual links and they are gradually replaced as links become articulated:

B. *As I start an essay to type it up, the first thing I do is put all the headings in bold and then I just go through and fill in bits of them with whatever reading I'm doing at the time, so the essay itself is pretty unreadable until the final drafts, because it is just paragraphs under different headings.*

C. *Presumably, the different headings need to get connected at some point, so do you think you achieve that?*

B. *Yes,... as you're typing you think, yes I can get rid of that bold heading cos I've already linked into it and others you have to really think about them cos they don't....and sometimes paragraphs get chopped to different places.*

In contrast, Adam's headings are descriptive of content. They are site names whose order is designated according to the importance of the artefacts:

I suppose the importance of the artefacts. I suppose it's just cos when I'm reading, it's just coming up all the time and it is just Southampton, it's just the big trading base. All our evidence is for here. Sites like London don't have it for the period.

Adam finds that his criteria for order do not work:

I suppose when you look at it like this it does jump around a bit, but I've never thought of it like that. Trying to explain it makes you think, actually that doesn't make any sense, why have I put that there?

Fifth, reading varied in its emphasis on the development of 'own opinion'. Some were actively questioning their reading, but others were more concerned with ensuring they had referenced adequately:

...like when I'm reading books I now think to myself why is he talking about this, what does this have in relation to what his opinion is, so I'm questioning the reading. (Ruth)

Yes,...it's very easy to look at classical arguments and judge them against each other and go well this is the one I prefer for this reason...But the best marks will always be where you come up with your own argument... (Ian)

I automatically assume that I've read it somewhere, therefore it's their point and I've not made it up myself. (Jenny)

(iv) Local coherence

There were also enabling and limiting factors associated with maintaining local coherence between sentences and paragraphs. This is analysed more effectively through the essay texts, but some insights are possible from the students' accounts. Halliday (1994) suggests that the 'texture' of the text comes from the semantic relationships between ideas. Students' descriptions suggest that this involves keeping hold of a number of ideas in order eventually to be able to link them:

So you say ok the title's trying to make that point, I will explain that point, put a counter point to that, maybe an objection to that and then I'll try and put my own point across and develop it within that framework. (Liam)

C. *So the progression is in your mind before you start.*

R. I think so yes, because I tend to do it on instinct rather than having to note it. I guess some of the points naturally progress from each other.
(Rachel)

Beth also describes it as '*having a light bulb moment*', and James as '*knowing in my own mind*'.

For some students, ideas and links became clear in the attempt to find expression for them. Ruth and Ian attempt to unfold an argument as they write the essay, but the argument does not become fully clear until they try to write it:

I've almost got to type myself, or plan myself into a way in of doing it. I've just got to write down enough and then all of a sudden it will come to me how I want to write it. (Ruth)

It was kind of like having to cross a river I had to build the bridge to get across to the end. I knew what the conclusion was going to be and the start but I wasn't quite sure about the middle bit. I worked it out as I went along, coming back and re-inserting or changing the order. (Ian)

Suzanne, in contrast, has a particular difficulty in articulating links:

I have the connections in my head on some aspects but I can't convey them through words, it's like I know what I need to put in but I just can't put it in mentally...

It's vague and I can explain it in a round- about way, but when it comes to putting it in words it just sounds awful. It just sounds like a jumble of ideas not really doing a lot in the essay.

We then compared her ability to write poetry with academic essays. It seemed that a single word in poetry could conjure up a host of images, but in essays everything has to be verbalised explicitly:

I think it's probably shown by an image or just a jumble of words or a sentence or something or just something little, but it means pretty much everything.

Table 5.5 summarises the common factors that enable or limit the development of global and local coherence, based on the students' descriptions of how they work.

	enabling	limiting
Global coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use title for information about structure • Planning that encourages focus on overarching points and relationships between ideas • Selective reading according to key points and arguments • Finding place for own opinion • Concurrent reading and writing that allows gradual emergence of structure as reading develops • Focus on working out whole argument before writing • Use of headings or sections to develop abstract conceptual links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use title to define content only • Tendency to use planning as information gathering structured according to content • Read for information without structure • No confidence to express own opinion • Concurrent reading and writing because of pressure to begin writing • Headings or sections used to organise content
Local coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to use semantic logic of argument • Able to have an overview of the material to create links that help define order • Able to articulate relationships between sentences and paragraphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggling to have overview (possibly related to reading covered) • Intangibility of how order is decided • Difficulty with finding expression for relationships

Table 5.5: Summary of enabling and limiting factors

(v) Discussion

So far, based on students' descriptions of what they do, analysis suggests enabling and limiting factors in the development of a coherent essay (table 5.5). This adds further to the dimensions of difference already suggested in the previous chapter. Three issues are discussed in relation to these findings:

- How the findings relate to notions of conflict between visual, holistic preferences amongst the dyslexic population and supposed linear analytic requirements in essay writing.
- How relationships are supported between recognised dyslexia-related difficulties in the HE population and difficulties with coherence

BUT

- How contextual factors are also seen to have an important influence on these students' ways of working.

Visual holistic preferences

Some argue that there is a conflict between the expected analytical sequential nature of an argument and the holistic, visual-spatial cognitive style of some dyslexic learners (see discussion in Morgan & Klein 2000). However, the subtlety and range of differences in approach seen in these students suggest a need for a more nuanced and clearly specified view of how these concepts relate to essay writing. There are few examples of 'purely' holistic or 'purely' analytical ways of working. Liam's ability to construct the whole argument in his head and manipulate concepts '*like a su doku puzzle*' show holistic visual spatial ways of thinking, but at the same time he can create a logical sequence of arguments and counter arguments. We also see Adam and Rachel using what superficially appear as visual planning strategies, but in effect analytical, sequential, verbal concepts are involved (c.f. Andrews 2010 for relationship between verbal and visual concepts). Connections between learning style and dyslexia were discussed in the literature review and it was suggested that care is needed not to over-generalise links between dyslexia and visual holistic thinking (Mortimore 2008).

The recursive continuous nature of planning throughout writing (Hayes & Flower 1983; Hayes & Gradwohl Nash 1996) also suggests similar over-generalisation about the sequential nature of expository writing. According to this analysis, thinking emerges in subtly different, often intangible, ways with features unrelated to learning style seeming to pre-dispose towards success (table 5.5).

An over-simplistic view of visual/holistic and verbal/sequential ways of thinking as conflict between inherent dyslexic characteristics and task requirements is problematic. There is an implied sense of intractability both in dyslexic characteristics and in the nature of essay writing which seem to preclude the possibility of change and development. In fact, many of these students are very effective problem solvers, showing flexibility in response to changes in understandings and contextual requirements. Assisting in this process is a key role of support tutors. A more balanced 'two-pronged' approach is achieved if there is also space for explicit discussion of the cultural assumptions in academic discourse (as in Lillis's dialogues of participation (Lillis 2006)). The analysis here

supports those expressing caution about labelling dyslexic learners with a particular learning style (Cooper 2009; Mortimore 2008).

Connections between difficulties with coherence and dyslexia

Dyslexia-related difficulties could be identified as associated with reading, with word retrieval and with the working memory implications of dealing with multiple processes.

Reading

Students' descriptions suggest that being able to develop overarching points and links relies on comprehensive coverage and understanding of the reading:

R. That's more my sort of idea. Otherwise I would have referenced it.

C. How have you arrived at the point where you can write something like that do you think?

R. I've got to have done enough reading. You've got to just know your subject. (Ruth)

B. Yes...and there seemed to be light bulb moments when I was writing where all of a sudden paragraphs that I'd written and they didn't fit anywhere found the place to fit.

C. Yes I could see that as I was going through it... What do you think is going on when you're doing that?

B. I think it's the familiarity. As I become more familiar and happier with the content the links seem to make more sense. (Beth)

It is recognised that for some HE students identified as dyslexic slow reading speed is problematic (Hatcher, Snowling, & Griffiths 2002; Hulme & Snowling 2009) and could interfere with attaining this comprehensive understanding, especially when time is short. A further point beyond a straightforward association with reading speed is the effectiveness of strategies for managing the purpose, volume and retrieval of reading material. The findings suggest that those students who successfully find points and links can either cover a range of reading (e.g. Ruth, Rachel (not dyslexic), Beth (not dyslexic) and James (not dyslexic)) or have effective strategies for managing it and focusing on analysis (e.g. Rob, Liam, Adam and Sophie, though she is not aware of her effectiveness).

Reading was also important to understanding the title. Price (2007) suggests a procedure for analysing the title that encourages the

combining of words indicating both content and structure. There were examples of students failing to combine these adequately, and also struggling to understand key words in the title. This may involve difficulty with combining and holding the whole meaning or with restricted vocabulary. Both could be dyslexia related, or it may just mean more guidance is needed in interpreting the title.

Word retrieval

The succinct and explicit expression of the signals indicating relationships between ideas are considered important to coherence and cohesion (Grabe & Kaplan 1996; Halliday & Hasan 1989). This requires the 'holding' of potentially related concepts in verbal form and the retrieval of appropriate linking words. It seems possible that clarity in this is impeded by difficulty with retrieving appropriate vocabulary (e.g. Suzanne). Hulme and Snowling (2009) suggest that naming difficulties arise where semantic representation is intact but the phonological representation of that meaning is not clearly specified. Wolf and O'Brien (2001) see it as a timing issue in the access and retrieval of phonological, semantic and lexical systems. There are also likely to be difficulties with vocabulary related to varying exposure to print (Snowling, Muter, & Carroll 2007). It is easy to see how difficulties are further compounded by anxiety to find 'acceptable' words. This is discussed further when essay texts are analysed.

Working memory issues

Related difficulties can also occur that seem less associated with word retrieval (e.g. Ruth). Ruth's difficulty is not with retrieving appropriate vocabulary but with combining words to form complex, but clear sentences. This could be associated with working memory and processing speed difficulties (McLoughlin, Leather, & Stringer 2002) where holding and reviewing composed sentence parts is inefficient. Again an additional memory burden is created by the need to produce a particular kind of language.

The simultaneous decisions managed in working memory include the ability to retrieve relevant points from long term memory, to store them in working memory whilst connections and order are considered and to compose succinct sentences to express them (Price & Skinner 2007;

Skellariou & Price 2010). Students can be seen to be managing different elements of these processes in subtle ways in an attempt to reduce cognitive overload. Writing in sections can be said to reduce working memory demands: students set out the material and then consider separately connections, order and overarching points. Liam produces a visual representation of a concept to 'hold' it while he considers its place in his argument. Adam's noting on the mind map of the first sentence of key sections in his reading 'holds' important points to avoid difficulty with remembering or locating them. To avoid losing her train of thought, Suzanne bullet points key ideas while she composes a sentence.

The pressure on resources is even greater if lower order processes are not automatic (Fawcett & Nicolson 2001). Liam ignores spelling mistakes while he focuses on ideas. References are left until after the essay is written to avoid interrupting thought processes.

I don't like interrupting myself when I'm trying to write, I'd rather get down some words rather than constantly having to harp back to my notes and try and find out who said this and who said that. I just fragment my ideas almost. (Ruth)

It is clearly possible to make connections between the dilemmas expressed by these writers and dyslexia. However, the difficulty with isolating dyslexia-related factors, as discussed in the previous chapter, is again apparent. Working memory issues alone do not explain why students experience differing degrees of difficulty and with different elements of coherence. Why do some describe problems with global coherence, others with more local levels and others do not have problems at all? Again, contextual influences are important.

Contextual influences

A major influence on strategies is the pressure of deadlines. Concurrent reading and writing, as well as being effective for some for the coherence of the essay, is also driven by anxiety about deadlines:

I think because if I just did all my reading I wouldn't have time to write. It's just a sort of time....at least I've then got something, even if it's not perfect. (Adam)

Even amongst the most effective writers, there is anxiety about the proportion of time spent reading in relation to writing:

My biggest problem is my reading. The way I usually approach it is I usually spend probably the first three quarters of the chunk of time I'm supposed to spend on it just reading and slowly going through it and slowly trying to understand it. it still kind of feels like oo I maybe should have written something by now. It feels a bit last minute sometimes. (Liam)

For Jenny, time pressure is the driving force behind how she works and her complex relationship with writing.

As well as the issue of time, it seems that sometimes, there is conflict between strategies for managing dyslexia and the most productive way of writing a coherent essay. Ruth experiences a conflict between what she perceives as an effective strategy for structuring her essay and the need to read and make notes in a pro-active way because of her dyslexia. She finds that by analysing the structure of the title she can reduce the volume of notes (a 'good' strategy). However, she realises, (interestingly in the course of the research interview) why she writes so many notes:

Also when I'm reading, it keeps my interest going when I'm writing. Yeah, I think that's what it is to be honest. If I'm writing it down I'm actually absorbing it. I think that's what it is unfortunately. It's a catch 22 situation that means I end up with lots of notes.

A similar conflict occurs for Suzanne; she has to slow down her writing to make it legible:

If I'm writing up notes, it takes me a long time. It doesn't really help the fact that my handwriting is quite scruffy so I have to, if I want to be able to just glance at it, [i.e. her notes] I have to try and make it neat and that takes a long time to do.

A further context related factor which influences the success of strategies is the nature of the required essays. I previously noted Adam's tendency to use headings for gathering content rather than for developing structure. This may be a stage in the kinds of essays he has to write rather than a limitation in his approach. His essay seems to require careful compiling of detail from the archaeological record and he uses

headings to organise this. This could be seen as a 'bottom-up' process. However, the final essay requires 'switching' between the 'bottom-up' process of gathering relevant descriptive detail of artefacts and the 'top-down' process of generalising analytical points. His use of headings may therefore be a useful starting point, but one that needs further development. Similarly, Liam's preference not to plan and to hold arguments in his head is successful because the essays are short and extensive surveying of literature is not required. He acknowledges that his strategies may need to change as the word count increases in his final year. We see therefore that the students' ways of working are driven to some extent by the kinds of essays they have to write.

Students also are having to mould their ways of thinking to expected ways (Andrews 2000). Difficulties can be associated with the implicit nature of the values and beliefs about writing in HE (Lea & Street 1999; Lillis 2006). Sophie expresses difficulty and frustration with understanding the title. She feels that there is always something in the title that she cannot understand and this is part of the 'test' set by her tutors. Students have to 'feel out' the ways of arguing that are expected in their discipline; it is not usually articulated or explained (Lillis 2001). There are certain forms of expression that are not permitted:

It's difficult to state what you think, because you can't say 'I think this'.

(Ruth)

In summary, this part of the analysis suggests dimensions which, for these students, enable or limit the development of a coherently structured argument (table 5.5). Discussion suggests how interactions occur between dyslexia and contextually driven reasons for differences. Self-identity and self-management as discussed in the previous chapter are also an influence. It is suggested that all of these combine differently for different students and this goes some way towards understanding success or struggle and explaining differences. The following analysis of the pre-writing plans and evolving and final essays gives further insights.

5.2 Pre-writing plans

The purpose in this part of the analysis is to follow up the students' descriptions of their strategies with analysis of their plans (where available). Their accounts of strategies give some insights into how differences are constituted in terms of enabling and limiting factors contributing to coherence. Here, I explore these factors through the more concrete analysis of their plans.

(i) Overview of essays

To give context to the discussion, table 5.6 gives the essay title for each student and their assessed mark.

Student	Essay title	Assessed mark
Adam	What is the evidence for overseas trade in late Saxon Britain?	62%
Beth	What contributions has Marxist thought added to archaeological theory? Evaluate their usefulness with examples.	72%
Ian	Explain what the Principle of Sufficient Reason is. Compare it to physical determinism and to related views such as that every event has a cause. Should we accept the Principle of Sufficient Reason?	59%
James	Trace the development of the castle defences from the Norman Conquest to the end of the thirteenth century.	67%
Jenny	What is a productive site and what do they reveal about Anglo-Saxon production, consumption, trade and exchange?	52%
Liam	Only the present exists. Discuss	70%
Rachel	How did Adolf Loos' work relate to the environment?	71%
Rob	Define what ancient soda-lime silica glass is as a material in terms of a) the raw materials used to make it and b) its chemical composition, including impurities. What effect does varying a) and b) have on its working properties?	67%
Ruth	'Children became the last symbol of purity in a world which was seen as increasingly ugly' (John Somerville). Discuss in the context of nineteenth century Britain.	65%
Sophie	Explain the principles of flint working. Explain how knowledge of these principles contributes to an	70%

	understanding of the developments in flint technologies from the Oldowan through to the end of the Palaeolithic.	
Suzanne	Where had the traders of the Uluburan ship obtained their various cargoes?	67%

Table 5.6: Essay titles and assessed marks

For Adam, Beth, James, Liam, Rachel, Rob and Ruth, the marks were around their expected standard. For Ian, this essay marked a point when he had decided to study the marking criteria and attempt to comply; for Jenny, the mark was lower than usual, to which she attributed extreme pressure of trying to write two essays in one night; for Sophie this was a big increase in previous marks, indicating what proved to be a sustained turning point in confidence and results; and for Suzanne it was a higher mark than usual, to which she attributed her choice of title where the topic was already familiar, thus reducing pressure on reading. As already stated, how they perceive and position themselves is not related to their achievement in assessment terms. Suzanne, for example, was puzzled why this essay achieved a better mark than usual and much more work is needed with Sophie to understand areas of difficulty and to build her confidence.

(ii) Essay plans

Pre-writing material was submitted in the planning interview by all students except Ian, Liam and Rob, who did not begin in this way. The material was surveyed and common features and differences identified. Key differences appeared to be:

- In the form of the plans
- In the capacity for 'self-talk'
- In reference to the title

The difference in the form of the plans was apparent, none falling exclusively into 'visual' or 'linear' categories and often being a mixture of notes and plans. This therefore supports the earlier suggestion that the form of the plan does not in itself predispose towards feeling enabled or limited.

Two further factors suggest a search for coherence at global level. One of these is the capacity for what I term 'self-talk' in the form of instructions

to self, overarching questions to self or own thoughts separate from the content. This suggests an ability to distance from the content to orient towards the purpose of the question (Fig. 5.1).

Intro
Briefly introduces Loos
Acknowledge his architectural and theoretical works
Explain his position within 'Vienna 1900' and cultural and social milieu
Postulate how his subsequent reputation and place within fin de siècle Vienna can shed light on 'Vienna 1900' as a whole (Rachel)

- have to state that I accept childhood as a social construct. (basis of essay, and will determine what areas I'm going to look) **Historians have been influenced by what scholars in the social sciences have written (hendrick)**

DEFINE SOCIAL CONSTRUCT – look at hendrick i.e. What different societies make of such immaturity differs throughout time

-certain points which have to be addressed in the context of the new paradigm of childhood being a social construct. (Ruth)

Fig. 5.1: Self-talk in plans

A further factor is the inclusion of pointers to the title. Figure 5.2 shows the difference between James and Suzanne. James seems clearly to be addressing the title whereas Suzanne focuses on content with less clear thought about how this will relate to the question.

(James: extract reproduced from handwritten plan)
Motte and bailey – Norman Conquest 11th century
Ringworks
Transition between the two
e.g. of each
Transition to stone > reasons
Increase defence (vs. attack/ vs. increased social show)

(Suzanne: extract reproduced from handwritten plan)
Intro
About the ship
Where it was found
Who found it.....
Middle
Various cargoes found – bit about each one
Tin/iron ingots etc

<i>Olive oil</i>
<i>Pottery</i>
<i>Figurines</i>
<i>What were the trade routes of the ship?</i>
<i>(list continues)</i>

Fig. 5.2: Differences in reference to title in plans

Pre-writing plans do not reveal thinking about local levels of coherence. This is more fully addressed with reference to the text.

(iii) Discussion

The ability to self-question, to withdraw from the content to evaluate thinking again leads to a consideration of 'top-down/bottom-up' thinking. Cooper (2009) argues that learners identified as dyslexic are more likely to benefit from a 'top down' approach. However, this does not fully represent what is happening here. Flower (1994:174), in her research on planning, codes plans and interviews according to how much attention is allotted to generating topic information compared to attention given to purpose, audience and discourse options. She considers that what writers do shows 'how they are choosing to negotiate the multiple demands of the rhetorical situation'. This seems to describe more aptly the differing attention given to content and the rhetorical purpose.

It is difficult to understand how dyslexia fits into this. The increased potential for cognitive overload in this switching of attention (Gregg, Coleman, & Lindstrom 2008; Skellariou & Price 2010) goes some way towards explaining it, but it seems again that a broader conception is more helpful than attempting to find only dyslexia associated explanations. The plans show how the writers differently negotiate the balance between content and discourse requirements. For example, part of this for Ruth is negotiating how to include important sources (fig. 5.1), and for Adam the priority is to categorise the content. It seems that there is interplay between the effects of dyslexia and the discourse demands.

The findings from the essay plans confirm the importance of the capacity to develop overarching points and to make reference to the structure indicated by the title. The importance of 'self-talk' about purpose and

ways of including references were additional points raised. The analysis reveals differences in focus on form and content that further suggest caution in aligning particular kinds of planning with dyslexic learners.

5.3 Evolving and final essays

Students were asked to e-mail their work after each writing session. This was with the aim of finding out how the essay evolved and the kinds of changes that were made between versions. My purpose is to explore how differences in achieving coherence or in struggling with it are constituted based on analysis of essay texts.

Table 5.7 sets out the number of evolving versions received from each student.

Student	Adam	Beth *	Ian *	James *	Jenny	Liam	Rachel *	Rob	Ruth	Sophie	Suzanne
No. of evolving texts	7	8	0	0	0	2	3	8	12	2	1

Table 5.7: Numbers of evolving essay texts. *Students not identified as dyslexic

Those not sending evolving text was as expected from descriptions rather than failure to send. I assumed that they achieved the best standard they could as they were writing and completed the essay in one sitting. Adjustments made during writing were therefore 'lost' for these students. For those who sent evolving text, versions were compared and additions, omissions or other changes between versions were coded onto the essay texts. I then reviewed the changes and noted their apparent purpose. The final essays are included as part of this process. The analysis is divided into three sections: how the global structure of the essay developed; how local coherence developed in terms of the flow of meaning and accessibility for the reader; and the lower order features of spelling and punctuation.

(i) The development of global coherence

Firstly I looked at final texts to explore whether a line of argument emerged. This was done subjectively, as in Ivanic (1998) and according

to Andrews (2010), by searching, usually near the beginning of paragraphs, for sentences that make overarching points that unfold the argument and relate to answering the question. It seems that three different phenomena are indicated:

- where the line of argument is clear and can be followed by the reader
- where the line of argument is implied by evidence and detail but not articulated or not clearly expressed
- where the line of argument cannot be followed.

Figure 5.3 represents how these students were situated according to these criteria. It is acknowledged that to some extent judgement about clarity is subjective; subject specialists for example may have made different judgements.

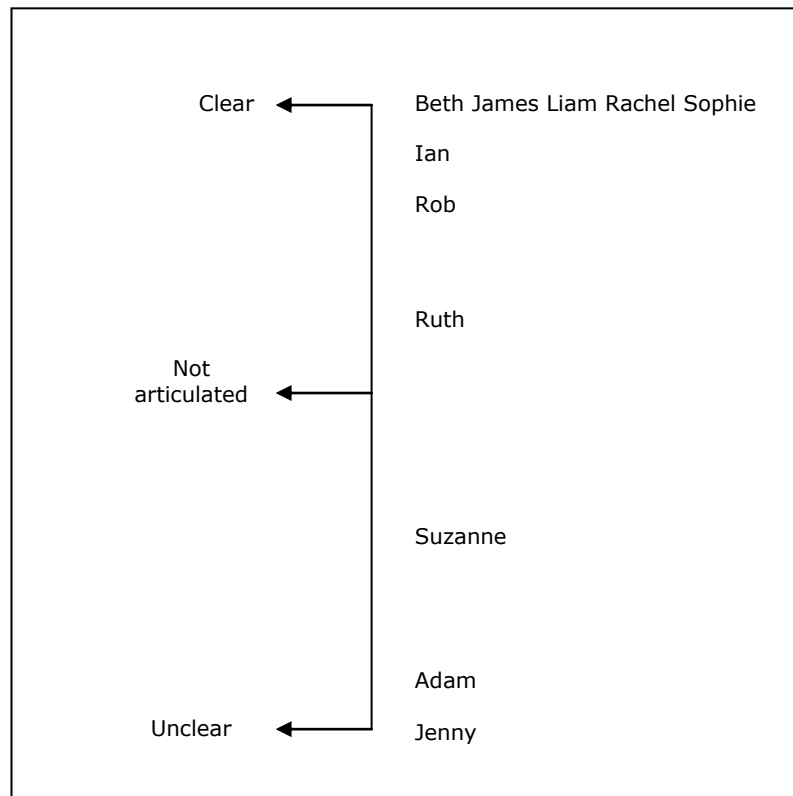


Fig. 5.3: Categories describing line of argument

Students' positions amongst these criteria are intended to reflect the subtle variation in outcome in attempts to achieve a clear line of argument.

I then examined the evolving texts to explore the different ways in which these outcomes occurred and three areas of difference are suggested:

- Differing relationships between content and structure
- Different use of 'overarching points'
- Varying confidence in expressing an independent argument

A fourth area identified was a lack of clarity at sentence level which interfered with understanding the line of argument. This is discussed in the section on local coherence.

Differing relationships between content and structure

One of the key features noted in the development of global coherence was the differing relationship between content and structure. As already discussed, this varies between those having a fully worked out structure before starting and those for whom structure evolves as they write. For those working out the line of argument before they began writing, the essays, as would be expected, evolve sequentially, with only minor alterations in wording as the essay progresses. Figure 5.4 shows the clarity with which Liam works out the overall discourse theme and the point at which each part is addressed in the essay is easily identified. Rachel also signals the line of argument and links between paragraphs.

In this essay I will be discussing the validity of Presentism, the view that only the present exists. To do this I will outline the basic position presentists take. I will then put forward the challenges I think are of most philosophical interest namely the problem of cross temporal relations, the problem of Minkowskian spacetime and the by-products of McTaggart's argument against time. Throughout this essay I will assess how effectively, if at all, Presentism can defend itself against such criticisms. I aim to show that it can effectively counter the first problem and can, to some extent, accommodate Minkowski spacetime. The arguments born out of McTaggart's work however in the end make the theory untenable. (Liam)

In adopting an aloof separateness from those whose ideas he opposed and in refusing to compromise his vision (occasionally losing him paid contracts) one can view Loos and his work as representing 'The Other' in the Viennese context. [paragraph start, page 2 version 1] (Rachel)

Through distancing himself from the prevailing Viennese environment to an extent and experiencing foreign cultural forms, Loos' work is able to provide a new perspective on his own culture that is ultimately more rooted in the Viennese than American environment. [end of above paragraph] (Rachel)

Loos is perhaps most renown to the modern-day scholar for his opposition to decorative historicism and ornamentation. Part of Loos' argument is grounded in a social conscience of the environment. [beginning of following paragraph]
(Rachel)

Fig. 5.4: Clear discourse theme

For the remaining students the evolving texts show a subtle interaction between development of content as reading progresses and development of structure. However, there are differences in emphasis and in success or struggle with achieving clarity. For Rob the final structure is visible early in the essay's development and changes focus on building content. Rob has clear sentences from the beginning that indicate how he is addressing the question. In subsequent versions, new content information is inserted and referenced (fig. 5.5).

As discussed before soda lime silica glass dominated early production up until medieval times and while there is a great variety in form the chemical composition is very uniform and is also very close to the constitution that makes up many modern examples. [overarching sentence Version 1]

It is important to understand with glass as a substance that it does not form a chemical compound it is a mixture and while there are present compounds in the chemical composition these are not joined as strongly as they would be in a compound, for example with covalent bonds. This gives glass its unique network which allows it to fall in the 'middle ground' between solid and liquid. [added to the above in version 2]

The structure is not uniform and can not be predicted like a crystalline structure, glass is therefore described to have a vitreous state. [added to the above in version 3]

*without a 'long range, periodic atomic arrangement'. (Shelby 2005, 3)
[further addition in version 5]*

Fig. 5.5: Content information added into clear structure

For Adam and Sophie the emphasis is in the opposite direction. They gather information and then attempt to find overarching points under which to organise them. Adam struggles to do this, as seen from the changes and content-driven nature in headings between versions (fig. 5.6).

<i>Version 1</i>	<i>Hamwic, Winchester</i>
<i>Version 2</i>	<i>Hamwic, Trade with the Rhineland, North Sea Trade, Coinage</i>
<i>Version 3</i>	<i>Hamwic, Trade with the Rhineland, North Sea Trade, Coinage, Wine trade</i>
<i>Versions 4 and 5</i>	<i>Hamwic, Trade with the Rhineland, North Sea Trade, Coinage</i>
<i>Version 6</i>	<i>Hamwic, Trade with the Rhineland, North Sea Trade, Coinage, London, Wine trade, Pingsdorfware</i>
<i>Version 7</i>	<i>Hamwih, Pottery, Pingsdorfware, Thetford, Coinage, London</i>
<i>Final</i>	<i>Evidence from southern sites, Evidence from Northern/eastern sites, Coinage</i>

Fig. 5.6: Adam's changes in headings

However, Sophie is successful. Her first version consists only of content, the principles of flint making. The next part of her process involves headed sections with a content plan for each followed by essay text. The heading then becomes the introductory point for the section and she continues to develop points that give coherence globally and between paragraphs.

Sophie and Adam are writing similar kinds of essays and both are identified as dyslexic. This raises the question of how differences between them might occur. One difference is that Adam has word finding difficulties which he describes himself and which are apparent in his interview accounts (stop/start and incomplete sentences occur frequently). This may be connected to the fact that he does not articulate the rationale for his headings. Sophie describes not knowing what language is expected, but in fact she has a straightforward, flowing writing style. It is possible therefore that their difficulties are differently situated: Adam's more strongly related to his dyslexia and Sophie's to her uncertainty in the context.

It can be said that Suzanne also is gathering detail of the archaeological record. Because the topic is familiar, she does this very effectively, but she does not articulate the 'overarching' points that answer the question until the conclusion. This is disorienting for a non-specialist reader (I could not make the 'bigger' points from the evidence in the body of the essay), but interesting also that she received a high mark for the essay. Changes in the evolving texts of others suggest attempts to develop structure at the same time as understanding the concepts involved. They are attempting to develop both global coherence that shows the overall

line of argument and hence coherence between paragraphs. Their thinking throughout is driven by conceptual links. Again here, however, there are subtle differences. Ruth has some idea of the overall structure from the start. Paragraphs are added, omitted and re-appear as the essay develops, but the structure set out from the start remains (fig. 5.7). Beth on the other hand is grappling with how to organise the whole. She knows that certain concepts are important, but it evolves only gradually how they become relevant to the essay title and how they link together. Johnson's 'three key points' disappear and re-appear in varying forms as the essay evolves.

In order to assess how changing attitudes toward children developed over time the ideas behind individuals such as Locke, Rousseauian idea of nature and the Romantic implications of childhood will be studied and the will be explored, the concept that social constructs change alongside developing ideas and factors. The second part of the essay will abide by the new paradigms theory that 'childhood, as a variable of social analysis can never be entirely separated from other variables such as class, gender and ethnicity'. Therefore factors which are relevant to childhood in the nineteenth century, ones which historians themselves have given more emphasis towards, economic and social factors, such as the industrial revolution, schooling, parent-child relations and family structure. (Ruth version 1)

In its original form, Marxism is a Material philosophy. Although the classical Marxist model has been heavily criticised, Johnson [1999:93] identifies three key points that emerged from the model that have direct relevance to the development of archaeological thought.
Beth continues with the beginnings of the three points.....
(Beth version 2)

Fig. 5.7: Simultaneous development of content and structure

By the final essays Beth has the overall line of argument clear and continuations or turning points between paragraphs can be identified. Ruth also has a line of argument running through the essay, but her lack of clarity of expression means that the argument is difficult for the reader to follow. This is discussed further in the following section. This also applies to Jenny, but in addition the overall line of thought is not clear.

The varying nature of 'overarching points'

An important indicator of overall coherence is the presence of 'overarching points', sometimes referred to as 'topic sentences' that are

relevant to the essay title and link paragraphs together. Analysis suggests, however, that there are differences in how these are used. They seem to divide into the following: sentences that give a general introduction to a subsequently more detailed discussion; sentences that explicitly tell the reader where the essay is going; and sentences that make a content-driven point followed by evidence (fig. 5.8). There was variation in the extent to which these were used, especially the second type (N.B. Jenny's and Sophie's confusion about whether they were 'supposed' to do this). This suggests that the concept of what we refer to as 'points' or 'topic sentences' is multi-faceted and a more nuanced understanding of these language issues seems important to understanding difficulty.

<p>(all from final texts)</p> <p>General intro.</p> <p><i>The intensive trade with the continent was a principle feature of this period.</i> (Adam)</p> <p>Explicit guidance for the reader</p> <p><i>Thus in order to effectively access Sommerville's quotation the first part of this essay will focus on the voices which created the stimuli escalating to the epitome of childhood purity in the nineteenth century.</i> (Ruth)</p> <p>Content point requiring evidence</p> <p><i>Altering both raw materials used to make up the glass batch and therefore the chemical composition has a major effect on the properties of glass, including both the working properties and the final state and look of a glass.</i> (Rob)</p>
--

Fig. 5.8: Different kinds of overarching sentences

Own voice and varying confidence in expressing it

As previously discussed, there is an expectation in HE that students take up a position in response to the essay question, that their own voice is heard (Barnett 2007; Elbow 2000) and, as shown from the students' perceptions in the previous chapter, there are varying levels of confidence in this. Different ways of addressing the balance between 'own opinion' and the literature are also evident in the essay texts and this affects the reader's perception of the strength of the emerging argument. Firstly, it can be related to making 'overarching points'; all of the ways that these appear can be said to have been expressed in the students' own voice and therefore stating a position. As suggested, these kinds of sentences are more easily identified in some essays than others.

Levels of confidence in having a voice are also suggested by the different ways of incorporating references into the essay. This shows in the point at which they appear in the evolving texts and in how they are incorporated into the final essay. Some write within a framework suggested by their sources, incorporating references from the start. Some do not include references in the evolving text, but insert footnotes as a reminder of the source. Full referencing then appears in later versions. For others, anxiety and uncertainty about referencing is apparent. Sophie is concerned about having enough different references. She keeps an account of the number of times she uses a particular reference in all the evolving versions. It is not always clear in Suzanne's essay what needs to be referenced. I was unsure whether the absence of referencing indicates a lack or whether it should be considered as shared knowledge in the field that does not require references. Figure 5.9 illustrates my dilemma as none of this was referenced. This meant that I was uncertain whether this was her voice or that of her sources.

There is also the importance of nearly a ton of tin ingots and other tin objects found on the seabed in the remains of the cargo. This clearly shows that at least some tin was being traded in the Late Bronze Age. The source of the tin in the Mediterranean is uncertain. It seems evident that at the time of the shipwreck, the vessel was sailing westward from the east Mediterranean coast, and taking with it tin, from an eastern source, as well as the copper from Cyprus. (Suzanne)

Fig. 5.9: Shared knowledge or lack of referencing?

When she does include them, she is uncertain about conventions. These pointers support the point made by Ivanic (1998) that how references are incorporated into the text indicates confidence in the ownership of ideas and emphasises that compliance with referencing conventions is not a mechanical process; it can be an indicator of confidence and positioning within the context and of different disciplinary expectations.

The dimensions of developing global coherence are summarised in table 5.8. Differences here refer to textual differences as well as differences between students.

Differences in developing global coherence	Enabling factors towards global coherence	Limiting factors for global coherence
Students are on or between	Being able to construct a line	Being unable to construct a

a range of having <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear line of argument • An implied but unarticulated line of argument • No line of argument 	of argument <p>Being able to articulate the line of argument supported by detail and evidence</p> <p>Partial success is sometimes possible by setting out detail and making points in the conclusion</p>	line of argument <p>Being unable to articulate a line of argument</p> <p>Attempting to articulate a line of argument, but not expressing it clearly</p>
Different balancing of the relationship between content and argument	<p>Could move from detail to overarching points</p> <p>Could clearly articulate analytical points</p> <p>Could sustain developing understanding of abstract concepts and making connections between them. This was done in different ways (working out whole argument before beginning or interleaving reading and writing)</p>	<p>Difficulty moving away from detail</p> <p>Could not articulate analytical points</p> <p>Struggle to select relevant concepts</p> <p>Struggle to note succinctly</p> <p>Struggle to express clearly</p>
Different uses of overarching points	<p>Reader could clearly pick out points written in writer's own voice and therefore had a sense of their argument</p>	<p>Difficult to pick out writer's own voice</p> <p>Over reliance on sources</p> <p>Unclear when references were necessary and when not</p>

Table 5.8: Dimensions of developing global coherence

(ii) Discussion

The analysis shows subtlety and complexity in the different ways that global coherence is developed or in which problems occur. Descriptions in the literature suggest connections between structure difficulty and dyslexia but the basis for this is not specified (Singleton 1999).

Suggested here is a need for in-depth analysis of how a text develops in order to understand the subtle differences in how problems occur. The analysis shows how the ways in which a text structure succeeds or is problematic are subtle and varied. It is only with greater awareness of these ways that we can begin to explore how dyslexia may or may not be implicated.

In terms of understanding the basis for these differences, previously discussed connections with dyslexia hold true, i.e. that reading speed and strategies, verbal expression and working memory issues are relevant. Time pressure is also an overarching factor when many of the processes take longer for those identified as dyslexic. However, analysis of the essay texts strongly confirms the influence of variation in the kinds of essays required. We see Adam, Sophie and Suzanne prioritising content because their essays require descriptive detail of artefacts before they can analyse their response to the question. We can then identify variation in the capacity to draw analytical points from this detail and consider possible reasons. Difficulty may be associated with verbal expression, with formulating abstract concepts or with relating the detail to abstract concepts. We see history essays and a theoretical archaeological essay requiring detailed negotiation between understanding and organising the abstract concepts involved and differences between Rachel, Ruth and Beth in approaches to doing it.

A further factor in the context is how teaching in different subject areas is structured and how strongly the essays relate to a course of lectures. The history students report that they do not have lectures in their third year – that teaching is in seminars based around a broad topic (e.g. for Rachel *Fin de siècle* Vienna) and choosing and researching a topic independently is expected. In contrast, some of the archaeology essay topics relate closely to lectures and Suzanne is able to choose a topic with which she is already familiar. Rob similarly draws on lecture content for final decisions about his essays. This difference has major implications for the volume and focus of reading and hence for deadlines.

It seems that each essay is a different socially constructed occasion to which each writer brings their previous experience and current understandings of what is expected. This is true for all student essay writers, but it seems that certain types of essays and certain sets of contextual circumstances may impact differently on dyslexia and on individual profiles.

(iii) The development of local coherence

This is explored following features of information structure suggested by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and discussed in the literature review. The issue is addressed at the level of coherence within paragraphs and sentences and involves the concepts of cohesion, given and new and theme and rheme (Lautamatti in Connor 1987; Halliday 1994; Vande Kopple 1986). Evolving and final essays were examined for changes at sentence level and also in more impressionistic ways for their effectiveness in communicating the writer's ideas. This involves my own judgement as a non-subject specialist. I also note where the writer received support.

Whilst chunks of text disappeared and reappeared between versions and additions were made, there were fewer major changes than expected in sentence construction as the essays evolved. For example, there was no evidence of Adam's move from 'small child' to 'university' writing. This suggests that the writers were mentally composing their best efforts before and during writing; difficulty is therefore not fully revealed. There were two exceptions, where meaning at this level was very difficult for the reader. I therefore approached this part of the analysis in two ways: firstly, by noting rewording of existing text between versions and considering the effects of these changes; secondly by a more detailed analysis of the two 'difficult' texts.

Changes in wording

For students whose meaning was not problematic, there were examples of minor changes in wording, which make a difference to ease of understanding. Concerns about word count could also have been a factor. Figure 5.10 shows examples.

The first real issue Presentism faces is that of special relativity within Minkowski spacetime [version 1]
Presentism faces a bigger problem with special relativity and Minkowski spacetime
[version 2] (Liam)

There are a few options. [version 1]
There are three clear options. [version 2] (Liam)

This idea is given further validity by the writings of artist Oskar Kokoschka, with whom Loos was firm friends. Writing after Loos' death, Kokoschka claimed Loos was a, 'Voice in the wilderness' [version 2]

This idea is given further validity by the writings of Loos' friend the artist Oskar Kokoschka. Kokoschka claimed Loos was a, 'Voice in the wilderness' [version 3] (Rachel)

Fig. 5.10: Minor word changes to increase clarity

Other changes involved changes in sentence boundaries and additions that enhanced cohesion. Sometimes (as in Suzanne's second example) the change was not an improvement (fig. 5.11).

In the areas that glass making originates such as Egypt sand obviously benefits from being abundant and easier to access, both in the form of desert and beach sands, but other compounds other than silica are found in these sands and are often an issue, for example iron affecting the colour of the glass, although with beach sand, shell inclusions may not be a negative as this provides the stabilizer. [version 5] (Rob)

*In the areas that glass making originates, such as Egypt **sand is abundant and therefore easy to access**, both in the form of desert and beach **sands**. **However** compounds other than silica are **also** found in these sands and are often **an issue**. **For example** iron **affects** the colour of the **glass produced**. **When using** a beach sand, shell inclusions may not have a negative effect as **they** provide **a** stabilizer.*

[version 7 after support] (Rob)

This date was confirmed by the tree ring analysis, dendrochronology, of logs that were used as cargo or firewood, and the date was 1316 BC. [version 1]

*This date was confirmed by **dendrochronology (tree ring analysis)**, of logs that were used as cargo or **firewood**. **The confirmed** date using this method was 1316 BC. [final] (Suzanne)*

The Uluburun was discovered by Turkish sponge divers and then handed over to the Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA). [version 1]

Turkish sponge divers discovered the Uluburun before she was handed over to the Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA). [final] (Suzanne)

Fig. 5.11: Changes in sentence boundaries

The changes in Rob's extract are of particular interest. He views his difficulty as essentially a problem with punctuation, but his girlfriend's additions are also improving cohesion and the signalling of connections between ideas. This is discussed further in the following section. Of importance also is the fact that these changes require a capacity to

monitor meaning, identify a problem and then revise. Rob could not do this without support.

Essays showing communication difficulty

The essays of Ruth and Jenny did not communicate easily and further analysis was carried out to explore why. Ruth accessed support, but was able independently to improve the communication by version 11. Jenny's single version is the one submitted for assessment. Examples from each are given in figure 5.11. These were selected at random but the problems pervade the whole essay.

Ruth

Version 3

One of the earliest works on the history of childhood and children is Centuries of Childhood, the famous work by Aries, in which childhood was something discovered by the --- ages. This idea, childhood being something which was discovered has been criticised in itself, but has also been criticised as it goes against the idea that attitudes are something which are developed over time and are something of a gradual process. Connotations of discovery suggest an abrupt arrival of the child being viewed as pure and that opinions of this kind were unique to the nineteenth century and thus were rapidly assimilated and accepted throughout society. Developments surrounding the child are evolutionary not revolutionary, suggestions of child purity were the climax of thought and theory sparked before the nineteenth century and thus not unique to it.

Version 11(changes made by Ruth)

One of the earliest works on the history of changing attitudes towards childhood and children is Centuries of Childhood, the famous work by Aries, in which childhood was something discovered after the Middle Ages. The idea of childhood being discovered has been criticised as it suggests connotations of an abrupt arrival of attitudes of purity whereby ideas would have had to have been accepted from the offset and rapidly assimilation. Through contemporary evidence, such as artwork, literature, ideological works and legislation to name a few, it can be seen that changing attitudes were gradual; attitudes towards children are something which are built upon and developed. Revisionist historians therefore advocate a more gradual change in opinion, ideas take time to be assimilated, discussed and accepted.

Final (changes made by dad)

One of the earliest works on the history of changing attitudes towards childhood and children is Centuries of Childhood, the famous work by Aries, in which he puts forward the concept of childhood as something discovered after the Middle Ages. This concept has been criticised as it suggests connotations of an abrupt arrival of attitudes of purity with ideas having to be accepted from the offset and rapidly assimilated. Through contemporary evidence, such as artwork, literature, ideological works and legislation to name a few, it can be seen that changing attitudes were in fact developed gradually. Revisionist historians

therefore advocate a more gradual change in opinion, ideas take time to be assimilated be discussed and accepted.

Jenny

It has been suggested that the term 'productive' site is possibly not the best term to describe the sites, originally the term was used during the 1980s however the lack of systematic archaeological investigation and also with the metal detectorists finding the material before the archaeologists did also meant that possibly a full picture of the site could not be achieved (Ulmschneider and Pestell 2002:2). A production site is after all an area where items were being produced and not all sites that yield coins yield evidence for production. If this is the correct definition then it was only during the second half of the eighth century that the emporia actually began to resemble a production sites by becoming a centre for intensive craft production, this is something that Hodge's has discussed (Hodge's 1989:84-84). Moreland on the other hand has argued that rather than there be a change from a gift giving to commodities it is entirely possible that both could have functioned within the same social space (Moreland 2000:75). It has been suggested that the major change in settlement happened before c.700, furthermore it has been suggested that this middle Saxon shuffle was just one of a number of elements that witnessed the emergence of new territorial and land-holding arrangements, it just so happens that the date of this shift coincided with the emergence of the emporia. However a number of theories have been put forward for the settlement shift including that the settlement's had to be moved because of soil erosion, population growth, population decline and technological advances (Moreland 2000:82-82).

Fig. 5.12: Examples of text that is 'difficult' for the reader

According to the model of Grabe and Kaplan (1996) writers have to structure information in ways that guide readers in understanding the writer's intention. Three methods are used to explore some of these aspects. These are firstly topical sentence structure analysis (Lautamatti 1987 in Connor 1987). She proposed that how sentences progress in a text is determined by the positioning of the sentence topic (usually the grammatical subject). These might appear in parallel or sequentially. Secondly, I use the concept of 'given and new'. Vande Kopple (1986) suggests that texts are easier to read if information that has already been given appears first in a sentence to give context to new information. The meaning of current text is guided by what has gone before. Thirdly, I analyse cohesive ties (Halliday 1994). The concept of cohesion is discussed in the literature review. This analysis is shown in Appendix 5.

In Ruth's text, sentences seem to be organised helpfully for the reader and some cohesive ties can be identified. It is evident that it was this aspect that she, and her dad in the final version, improved. Even though

this analysis was helpful in understanding the difficulties, it did not fully explain them. A further barrier in Ruth's text seems to be lexical choices. Hoey and Winter (1986) discuss how readers infer semantic connections from the juxtaposition of words. Ruth appears to generate vocabulary and word combinations that require effort for the reader to process (e.g. *Connotations of discovery suggest an abrupt arrival of the child being viewed as pure*). The noun phrase '*the abrupt arrival of the child being viewed as pure*' is too densely packed and requires effort in order to process the meaning. Another example is '*childhood being discovered*', which her dad changes to '*the concept of childhood as something discovered*'.

In considering Ruth's difficulty further, I compare her writing with Suzanne's. Suzanne strongly describes the struggle to produce coherent sentences and is often dissatisfied with the result. In Suzanne's examples in box 5.11 above, we can feel this sense of struggle, but the end result is straightforwardly expressed. This raises questions about how Ruth's obfuscating verbosity and Suzanne's slightly stilted struggle can both be explained in terms of dyslexia. I consider this further in the discussion.

Jenny's text was shown to be problematic by all three analyses. Overall there was too much work left for the reader to do to infer her intended meaning. This was evident in the presentation of too many topics too quickly, where the links between them were not clear. It is probable that a subject specialist would understand connections that were lost to me (e.g. the significance of '*the middle Saxon shuffle*'). This, however, conflicts with the expectation that UK academic discourse is explicitly signalled to avoid misunderstanding (Grabe & Kaplan 1996). There are also additional problems in Jenny's text. There seems to be disruption in the relationship between overarching points and evidence. She appears to make a point and not follow it up; one point follows another and it is difficult to understand how they are connected. Long sentences are also a problem (discussed below).

Before summarising and discussing this part of the analysis, I briefly explore spelling and punctuation.

(iv) Spelling and punctuation

As discussed in the previous chapter and in the literature review, I suggest that consideration of these so-called transcription or mechanical errors in coursework is not necessarily a transparent representation of severity of difficulty. It is more important that we properly understand the problem and how the writer tries to deal with it.

Spelling

In the previous chapter, I analyse approaches to spelling and suggest that affective responses to spelling are important. In this chapter, I attempt to explore in concrete terms the relationship between the extent of the spelling problem and affective responses. Errors in evolving and final essays were counted (table 5.9) to establish whether or at what point errors were corrected. Correct spellings but 'wrong' word were counted as errors. The differences in patterns of occurrence, kinds of errors and correction procedures are not discussed as close spelling analysis is not part of my purpose.

Students	No. of different errors in evolving versions	No. of errors in final version	No. of words (approx)	Errors in final version
Adam	11	6	2000	Thought/though(x2) distribution/distributed, where/were, orgins/origins, been/being(x2), strip/stripe
Beth*	10	4	3000	That/than, practises/practices (x2), there/their (x2), bee/been
Ian*	n/a	1	1500	No/not
James*	n/a	0	3000	
Jenny	n/a	2	2000	Where/were, meant/mean
Liam	27	1	1500	Crooks/crux
Rob	4	0	3000	
Rachel*	0	0	3000	
Ruth	16	3	3000	Nativity/naivety, access/assess, affects/effects
Sophie	0	8 (in final typed version, but not in handwritten	3000	f/of, won/own, fomr/from, larges/larger, produce/product, face/fact, t/to, lades/blades
Suzanne	1	1	2000	Slopping/sloping

Table 5.9: Spelling errors in evolving and final essay * students not identified as dyslexic

The analysis confirms that the number of errors is not related to the extent of the spelling problem perceived by the student. Spelling is a problem for Suzanne according to her interview accounts, but not represented by errors in her text. Conversely, it is not problematic for Liam in spite of a high error rate when he does not consciously apply strategies. To some extent also, the extent of the problem is not revealed by my research design. Adam for example describes uncertainty about spelling, which he manages successfully, but the full extent of the difficulty appears disguised by his capacity to operate positive strategies. A further issue is that the extent of the problem is influenced by willingness to experiment with unfamiliar words. Ruth seems to do this and makes errors in word form, which she eventually corrects (exceserborate/exacerbate, extensiously/extensively). This was also apparent in one interview, where she was comfortable with trying out but hesitating over the word 'succinctly'. Rob on the other hand describes using words that are familiar. The typographical errors from Sophie were unexpected. In the final interview, we had worked from a handwritten version where no errors were present; the typed version was sent after submission at a later date.

Overall however, the analysis of errors confirms a general lack of automaticity with spelling with typical examples of wrong word selection or confusion (properly/probably, been/being, stripped/striped, slopping/sloping etc) and misspellings (fictious/fictitious, convient/convenient). This suggests that correction of errors and conscious application of strategies is taking time. However, it confirms that more errors do not necessarily mean more negative affective responses and greater interference with writing processes.

Punctuation

In this part of the analysis, I return to the sentences previously discussed and shown again in figure 5.13.

Versions 1-6

In the areas that glass-making originates such as Egypt sand obviously benefits from being abundant and easier to access, both in the form of desert and beach sands, but other compounds other than silica are found in high levels in these sands and are often an issue for example iron affecting the colour of the glass, although with beach sand, shell inclusions may not be a negative as this provides the stabilizer.

Version 7

In the areas that glass making originates, such as Egypt sand is abundant and therefore easy to access, both in the form of desert and beach sands. However compounds other than silica are also found.... in these sands and are often an issue. For example iron affects the colour of the glass produced. When using a beach sand, shell inclusions may not have a negative effect as they provide a stabiliz

Fig. 5.13: Punctuation example sentence, Rob

The example raises a number of points about what is meant by 'punctuation problems'. The changes made suggest that it is not just a mechanical process of knowing where to put full stops. The uncorrected version suggests a pressure to write ideas down before they are forgotten. This is confirmed by Rob's account of what happens:

I'll get an idea and I'll start writing it and I'll think of another idea that links in with it and just add it on to the end and that's why I get very long sentences.

In some ways therefore lack of punctuation allows him to prioritise the expression of ideas. In addition, his motivation to achieve accuracy is driven by assessment rather than a need for accuracy:

I know that there are certain ways of doing it, but I still think well if I was writing that you'd still understand what it says, but obviously you'd also put a red line underneath it and I'd get a lower mark so I change it mainly from the fact that it's assessed.

The main difficulty is that he cannot easily revise the sentences himself:

I mean if you point out the mistakes I'll be able to change them, but because I've written it I kind of know what I've written and I know what I mean, so I know it's right. I just kind of miss out the mistakes, but if someone points them out I can see them usually.

I compared Rob's situation with an example from Jenny's text (fig. 5.14).

It has been suggested that the term 'productive' site is possibly not the best term to describe the sites, originally the term was used during the 1980s however the lack of systematic archaeological investigation and also with the metal detectorists finding the material before the archaeologists did also meant that possibly a full picture of the site could not be achieved (Ulmschneider and Pestell 2002:2).

Fig. 5.14: Punctuation example sentence, Jenny

This shows a similar 'run-on' sentence that again suggests the need to write down ideas before they are lost. However, in some instances the problem is resolved by the insertion of punctuation marks and in others it is a problem with understanding the relationship between ideas. Jenny also has different reasons for her failure to correct; these appear to be time pressure and emotional barriers to reading through her own writing. She suggests in her final interview (after submission) that she would have been able to improve her work if she had read it through. (She brought to the interview the assessment sheet for a previous essay for which she had received a mark of 72%)

This brief analysis of punctuation suggests again that the problem is more than a mechanical problem, that there are dyslexia associated working memory problems involved in the need to write down ideas before they are lost. The different reasons why errors are not corrected further illustrate the importance of understanding the reasons for difficulty. Straightforward teaching of punctuation rules is not the answer.

Table 5.10 summarises the dimensions associated with developing local coherence.

Differences in developing local coherence	Enabling factors	Limiting factors
Different elements of maintaining information structure revealed differences in the ways communication broke down	Could maintain cohesive ties Could maintain appropriate sentence organisation Could monitor own meaning and revise where necessary Possible connection to sense of audience	Lack of cohesion Problems with sentence organisation Not able to monitor own meaning Not able to revise Need to write down ideas

		before forgotten
Differences between extreme verbosity and stiltedness	Can monitor and improve	Lack of precision in lexical choices Difficulty with generating a coherent sentence
Differences in reasons for and responses to transcription errors	Positive response reduces interference with composition Able to retain ideas while sentence is composed Able to monitor and revise	Negative response interferes with composition Need to write before forget Cannot monitor or revise

Table 5.10: Dimensions of developing local coherence

(v) Discussion

In the analysis of sentence level coherence, the different elements of information structure enhance understanding of different kinds of problems. I also rely on more impressionistic analysis of language features based on my knowledge and experience. The analysis further shows the importance of understanding the detail of how texts work before trying to evaluate dyslexia-related difficulty.

The key enabling feature in this aspect seems to be the capacity simultaneously to generate and organise sentence level ideas and compose them into a coherently structured sentence or at least have effective strategies for achieving this. The potential for cognitive overload is clear, both because of the necessity for simultaneous processing and for switching between conceptual meaning and language. Fundamental to this is the capacity to monitor language produced to assess how effectively it communicates intended meaning. There seem to be differences in this capacity, some having no awareness of problems and others an awareness but inability to revise. In turn there are varying reasons for the inability to revise.

Judgements about revisions are also likely to be affected by cognitive overload because of reading through and monitoring meaning (Kellog 1996). In the case of Rob, limitations may be exacerbated by attentional and visual difficulties in reading. There is also evidence of differing motivational and contextual factors. Part of Ruth's difficulty arises from her perception of the language she is expected to produce. As quoted in

the previous chapter, she acknowledges that she tries to make her writing 'too posh' and actually 'needs to simplify'. Jenny's difficulties with concentration are extreme and she is writing the essay during the night before the deadline. She cannot bear to read it through and relies on the marks she has received previously to evaluate her writing. She has a complex relationship with the academic environment because of this. For Rob, it is mainly his perception that his marks will suffer that motivates him to improve the effectiveness of communication, but he has some problems with monitoring the effectiveness of his communication.

The differences between Ruth's verbosity and Suzanne's struggle are puzzling. Ruth is more confidently positioned within the context and does not experience word finding problems. Yet her vocabulary choices and combinations often lack precision. This is different from Suzanne's struggle to find words and anxiety that her words are not good enough. It raises again the question of whether word finding difficulties and/or lack of exposure to a variety of discourses might be a particular risk factor. Understanding the source of Ruth's difficulties is more problematic. Working memory may be implicated in her apparent difficulty in monitoring meaning, but her problems centre more on how her flood of words can be focused into more precise lexical and syntactic structures. This may be a timing issue between semantic and lexical/syntactic pathways (Wolf, Bowers, & Biddle 2000) resulting in 'fuzziness' of meaning.

A further contextual element relates to sense of audience. According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996), maintaining a flow of information involves making meaning as easy as possible for the reader to access. Analysis in the previous chapter suggests that awareness of and relationship with audience is variable. It is possible therefore that strengthening this awareness or gaining confidence in the audience could have an effect on the ease with which points might be articulated. For example, for Adam and Ruth, couching their difficulty in terms of having to 'tell your reader explicitly in your own words what you think' may be helpful.

Both Rob and Ruth access support. Both seek help with specific aspects of their writing that they have identified for themselves or have been pointed out by tutors. Rob seeks support from his girlfriend to do first

level corrections and from student services to identify patterns in the kinds of errors he makes. Ruth approaches support differently; she asks her dad to correct her tangled meanings and because of time pressure does not engage with his comments in 'track changes'. The root causes of her difficulties are not addressed. As suggested in the previous chapter, we need a better understanding of support processes.

The analysis of transcription errors confirms that the number of errors does not necessarily indicate the severity of the problem. That is not to say that spelling and punctuation errors should not be addressed, though the teaching and learning of spelling, for example, is not a major part of work at this level. The focus is more likely to be on practical coping strategies that explore the reasons for the problem and the reasons why it cannot be corrected. Also of interest is the extent to which a negative affective response interferes with other aspects of composition. Suzanne's anxiety about spelling, for example, is an additional drain on cognitive resources during sentence composition.

5.4 Concluding comments on analysis

The students' strategies, plans and evolving and final essay texts have now been explored in some detail. At each stage in the analysis, dimensions that contribute to the differences between students are identified and tabulated. Table 5.5 sets out the enabling and limiting factors that seem to contribute to local and global coherence based on students' accounts of their strategies. Table 5.8 suggests dimensions for developing global coherence as evidenced in the essay texts and table 5.10 the dimensions of local coherence based on essay texts. Discussion then centres on how the dimensions might relate to dyslexia and how the context is implicated.

These tabulations, along with those in the previous chapter, are more than summaries of findings. Their purpose is to map dimensions of difference between students. I suggest that these detailed mappings contribute to understanding the differences between these student essay writers. They suggest avenues of exploration for work with students that recognise the complex interactions between academic writing and dyslexia. I suggest that this reduces the risk of poorly specified links

between the two areas. It offers an understanding that moves beyond the level of description towards more detailed explanation of different interactions in different contexts for different individuals.

In the concluding chapter, I assess the conclusions that these findings allow, discuss their implications and reflect on the research, both in terms of its usefulness to the field and its methodology.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Understanding differences in essay writing: conclusions, implications and reflection

6.1 Summary and conclusions

The study set out to examine how we might understand differences in the essay writing experience and essay texts amongst a sample of HE students identified as dyslexic. My aim was to examine dyslexia in a specific context and to embed these writers within an academic literacies framework of academic writing. I take the term 'interpretive practice' from Gubrium and Holstein (2000:500) and in chapter 4 build a 'contextually constructive' picture of the students' essay writing experience. In this chapter, I examine how the students' perceptions of their different essay writing experiences are constructed. In chapter 5, I build a 'contextually scenic' picture (Gubrium & Holstein 2000:500) of what the students do, their strategies and processes. The data in both chapters consists of students' interview accounts and in chapter 5 also their evolving and final essay texts.

A coding framework was developed that was informed partly by an academic literacies approach to writing. This consists of 'Self' including self-identity and self-management, 'Relationships' with real and metaphorical others that occur as part of academic essay writing and dyslexia and 'Essay Practices' that describe writing strategies and ways of working. Vignettes created from this framework suggest that there is no association between the extent of difficulties students describe and how they experience writing an essay. Further analysis suggests dimensions that show how their experience is constructed. Analysis of local and global coherence in evolving and final essay texts and of plans, where available, reveals further dimensions in relation to achieving coherence, variation in success of the outcome and variable ways in which communication can break down. These dimensions contribute further to individually different constellations of experience.

I suggest, in answer to my research question, that it is the identification of these different dimensions (shown in tables 4.6, 4.8, 4.10, 5.5, 5.8, 5.10) that allows the mapping of individual difference and that embedding these student writers within an academic literacies framework reveals these dimensions of difference between them. To exemplify this, the constellations of difference in three students are shown in table 6.1.

Students	SELF/Self-identity	RELATIONSHIPS	SELF/Self-management and difficulties	FINAL/EVOLVING TEXTS: Achieving coherence
Liam Philosophy (positive/enabled, concordant)	Positive school experience; early identification; self-belief maintained; authoritative on content; confident about expressing own ideas and knowing how; awareness of own writing; understanding of effects of dyslexia and how to deal with them.	Concordance between personal and disciplinary ways of being; reader not a threat; concordance between feelings about own language and that required; successful management of deadlines and word count.	Difficulty with automatic spelling accuracy and reading speed; pronounced good days and bad days for reading (visual discomfort, maintaining concentration). Aware of problems and knows why strategies work; can create 'comfort zone'; ability to articulate thoughts about writing; flexibility to adapt to context change.	Can develop a line of argument; can identify sentences that express line of argument; can sustain understanding concepts at same time as making connections between them and articulating them; reader can identify the writer's voice. Can maintain cohesion and appropriate sentence organisation; can monitor and revise; can manage transcription errors.
Adam Archaeology (mixed positive/enabled fragile/undermined, concordant)	Negative school experience related to unidentified dyslexia; Self-belief damaged; positive experience of transition; enthusiasm for subject; confident about expressing own ideas and knowing how; authoritative on content; liking for own writing mixed with doubts about own language; at point of change in understanding of dyslexia.	Concordance between personal and disciplinary ways of being; reader not perceived as a threat; own language not good enough in relation to expectations; potential of support services not fully taken up.	Severe early literacy problems; self-perception as 'stupid'; attributed later academic success to chance; difficulties with spelling, word retrieval, reading speed, maintaining concentration, memory, developing argument and structure and perceptions of own writing. Aware of problems and knows why strategies work; confidence to experiment with solutions; capacity to create 'comfort zone'; difficulties not problematised; dyslexia as prompt to change in self-understanding.	Difficulty developing a line of argument; difficulty moving away from detail; difficulty articulating analytical points. Can maintain cohesion; can monitor own meaning and revise at local level; possible connection to sense of audience. Few transcription errors, so effort to achieve this is masked.
Sophie Archaeology (fragile/undermined, alienated)	Positive experience of school (dyslexia unidentified); negative experience of transition; dislike of writing essays at university;	Contextual voices experienced as hostile and unclear; reader perceived as a threat; own language not good enough in relation to expectations;	Difficulties with referencing, using the literature and understanding the title. Development of strategies impeded by negative feelings about context; no	Can develop a line of argument; can articulate analytical points (but does not recognise them); reader can identify writer's own voice. Can maintain cohesion and

	struggle to gain understanding of material; unaware of how own writing sounds; little understanding of dyslexia.	undermined by word count; uses of support not understood; dyslexia associated voices not developed.	recognition of productive strategies; lack of awareness/recognition leads to 'no comfort zone'.	appropriate sentence organisation; can monitor own meaning and revise; few transcription errors.
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Table 6.1: Constellations of difference

The identification of these dimensions of difference prompts a number of further conclusions:

- The relationship between dyslexia and essay writing difficulty can be re-conceptualised.
- The relationship between difficulties and strategies changes.
- The many different ways in which students develop their essays and in which communication can break down are made visible and need to be understood more clearly.
- Time and emotional investment and persistence of difficulties are made visible.

(i) The relationship between dyslexia and essay-writing

Identifying these dimensions of difference allows the relationship between dyslexia and essay-writing to be reconceptualised as a web of interacting and intervening forces. We can see how culturally driven dilemmas shared by all students interact with cognitive characteristics of dyslexia and how cultural factors intervene to mitigate or exacerbate the effects of potential cognitive disadvantage. For example, even though slow reading (Hatcher, Snowling, & Griffiths 2002) and a colloquial writing style (Farmer, Riddick, & Sterling 2002) are recognised as problematic for HE students identified as dyslexic, Liam's slow reading is experienced as an asset in philosophy and concerns about his colloquial writing style are overridden by his ability to present complex arguments clearly and straightforwardly. Conversely, a priority for Sophie would be to boost her confidence within the context to encourage her awareness of positive writing attributes.

Cognitive characteristics of dyslexia are complicated further when we see transition to university interacting differently with previous experience for Sophie and Adam with very different effects on their experience of learning and writing at university. Adam's problems with developing a line of argument are less rooted in a cognitive difficulty and more within the context when we perceive his efforts as being a necessary part of the kind of essay he has to write.

The examples of cultural influences are not intended to minimise the dyslexia-related cognitive issues for these students. All the writers

identified as dyslexic described behavioural manifestations of dyslexia that reflect those in the literature (difficulties with spelling, word-finding, sentence composition, essay structure, slow reading, maintaining attention). As suggested by the discussion in the Literature Review of the connections between theories of dyslexia and writing, these are likely to be influenced by lack of automaticity and phonological and working memory problems. My suggestion is, however, that these kinds of difficulties are variously mediated by other factors to the point where they cannot stand alone as explanations of essay-writing difficulty. I suggest that this study begins to detail what these mediating factors are in the context of academic essay-writing.

Theoretically, in considering this relationship between dyslexia and essay-writing and following the discussion of the concept of dyslexia in the final section of the literature review, it seems possible to reconcile a sociocultural view of dyslexia with adequate acknowledgement of potential cognitive disadvantage. This is particularly so when cognitive processes are not viewed in an essentialist way, i.e. as intractably leading to particular writing behaviours.

(ii) The relationship between difficulties and strategies

A second effect of identifying interacting dimensions is a change in how we think about the relationship between difficulties and strategies. A strategy seems not always to be a straightforward solution to a problem. The importance of metacognition is well recognised (Reid 2009); it is part of a support tutor's role to explore with students the ways of learning that work and to discuss why. These findings suggest, however, that meta-affective and meta-linguistic awareness are equally important.

The importance of meta-affectivity is expressed in the codes 'creating a comfort zone' and having a 'solution-finding approach'. As discussed in chapter 4, these arose from striking differences in how 'problems' were approached. In the example above (table 6.1), we see Adam coping with very negative early experience and an array of difficulties. Yet, he experiences writing in positive ways. He is self-aware and, along with his enthusiasm for his subject, he creates environments that work for him.

In contrast, Sophie is not able to do this. In fact she has some effective strategies and writes well but cannot recognise it. A disconnection between extent of difficulty and affective response was also apparent in the analysis of spelling. This kind of disconnection emphasises the importance of developing meta-affectivity as part of the support process.

Meta-linguistic awareness was shown to be similarly important. This was evident in two ways: there was a marked difference in students' capacity to use the meta-language to talk about language; there were also differences in the capacity to monitor meaning and recognise how language changes improve communication of intended meaning. These aspects were revealed in interview accounts of how students developed argument, in discussion of their essays in retrospective interviews and in the analysis of evolving texts. The use of meta-language to discuss language was suggested in the dimension of having a 'liking for own writing or an awareness of how it should be' (Table 4.6). Some students more than others had the capacity to analyse how their essays developed. The use of meta-language is likely to be influenced by previous opportunity and teaching. However, an additional factor is the lack of discussion in universities about academic discourse, such as the nature of argument in different disciplines or different perceptions of what counts as evidence.

Experience suggests that difficulty with monitoring meaning and recognising how language changes have improved communication is difficult to address. Rob, for example, can recognise that a sentence 'sounds better' but does not know why. It is possible that for some students frequently used syntactic forms and sentence patterns used in academic writing are not established in long-term memory (Daiute 1984; Shaughnessy 1977). A further possibility is that students focus only on meaning-carrying words as expressing their ideas at the expense of the function words that bind them together. In general, however, this suggests that the relationship between difficulties and the strategies that resolve them is multi-layered. No matter how promising the strategy, affective and linguistic factors can enable or limit its effectiveness.

(iii) The variation in essay development and communication breakdown

A third effect arose from the way that the analysis made visible the many and subtly different ways that essays developed and in which communication could breakdown. The use of the concept of coherence and its precise definition was very important to this. Subtly different dimensions of difference were revealed by scrutiny of accounts and observation of planning and by applying a concept of global and local coherence to the analysis of essay texts. This suggests that a more nuanced and detailed breakdown is needed of the many different ways in which students develop their texts and equally the many different ways in which communication can break down.

At the global level of coherence, stark divisions between visual/holistic and verbal/linear ways of planning and thinking were suggested to be inadequate to describe the complexity and subtlety of the varied constructive processes that these students go through in developing their essays. The decisions they make are subject to a variety of influences that seem to go beyond internally determined learning style. Dyslexia-related working memory problems are likely to be implicated in managing the simultaneous processes necessary. However, the writers are also influenced by their understanding of what is expected and the decisions they make are adjusted according to previous experience of writing essays and previous assessments. They are also influenced by the nature of the essay itself which varies between and within disciplines. Some express frustration at the lack of clarity about what is expected and some describe how they write differently when writing in different disciplines and for different tutors.

Analysis at local levels of coherence shows the different ways that communication can break down at sentence and paragraph level. This complicates how we might make connections between dyslexia-related cognitive difficulties and written expression at HE level. It suggests that we need to seek explanations of difficulty not only in working memory processes but also with an awareness of the social context and the job that language has to do within it. It further suggests the limitations of an autonomous model of literacy said to prevail in some areas of dyslexia

research (Herrington & Hunter-Carsch 2001; Wearmouth, Soler & Reid 2003). Students have strong perceptions about the kind of language they are 'supposed' to produce and how their own language measures up to this. They are therefore striving in their language decisions to produce 'sophisticated' words or 'university writing'. There are also stark differences between obfuscating verbosity and a stilted struggle for words and it is difficult to connect both of these with recognised dyslexic characteristics without more detailed consideration of contextual factors. Dyslexia as the cause of 'punctuation problems' in lists of dyslexia-related difficulties seems superficial when the different reasons for their occurrence and for the failure to revise are considered.

(iv) The effects of dyslexia made visible

The multiple dimensions of difference suggest great variety in the way essay writing and dyslexia are experienced. However, in the midst of this multiplicity some consistent effects of dyslexia are made visible in this writing context. The crux of my argument has been that we can view neither dyslexia nor writing in isolation from the context. Whilst it is possible to make connections between phonological and working memory processes, it is challenging to isolate specific writing problems that are solely dyslexia-related. Suzanne's word-finding problems, for example, are influenced by her search for 'sophisticated' words. In spite of this, I suggest that the study makes visible the large amount of time and/or emotional investment involved in essay writing for these students. Also it makes visible the persistence of difficulty, and dealing with difficulties, even when successful, is time-consuming.

For all the students, time was an issue experienced in slightly different ways. This was most extreme where getting started and maintaining concentration were problematic. However, there were also examples of starting to write before being in control of the content, starting to write to 'feel better' and concern at the proportion of time spent reading in relation to writing. Last minute changes and last-minute accessing of informal support were also evident. Feelings of stress and being totally taken over by the essay were expressed. Sometimes this stemmed from sheer interest in the subject but other dimensions were involved. Dealing with difficulties such as spelling was time-consuming even though there

was sometimes little evidence of inaccuracy in essay texts. Reading was slow and strategies for managing it took time and effort. There was sometimes conflict between the most time-effective ways of working and those that took longer, but were necessary because of dyslexia related problems.

This is not to imply that those not identified as dyslexic did not express stress or anxiety or high levels of involvement. However, there was evidence that there was more scope for flexibility in the ways that they worked. Rachel, for example, could adjust the language for this essay in response to the comments of a tutor. Ian could decide he would comply with requirements and was confident that he could adjust his style accordingly. Rachel and Beth could be confident that they had covered a wide range of reading.

Viewing essay writing as involving complex intervening and interacting dimensions suggests that work with these students involves processes of negotiation for each essay. Awareness is needed of changes in the context of the essay, in the nature of the essay itself and the current and previous experience that the writer brings to each act of writing. This includes negotiating the effects of dyslexia. This seems more accurately to reflect essay writing for these students. It involves understanding the interaction between individual cognitive profiles and the much broader view of shared dilemmas arising from the context.

Overall, the study presents a detailed, in depth picture of the writing experience and essay texts of this group of students. The organisation of that experience within an analytical framework incorporating writing identity, self-management, relationships within the context and understandings of academic language and argument significantly adds to our understanding of how these writers feel about themselves as writers, about their position in the context and how they come to write in the ways that they do. The analysis of their plans and texts shows the many different ways in which they address the content and structure of their essays and the many different ways in which their attempts can succeed or fail.

6.2 Implications

This much broader picture of essay writing has implications for supporting writers identified as dyslexic and for possible directions of research in this area. These implications are discussed in the following section.

(i) For the support process

An important implication of this study centres on issues around the culture and content of the support process. During the course of the study, the processes of applying for funding for support became increasingly centralised. According to the findings of the National Working Party in 1999 (Singleton 1999), there were concerns amongst Local Authorities about inconsistency and potential inaccuracies in DSA funding decisions. In 2004, greater consistency was achieved through the setting up of the DSA Quality Assurance Group (QAG), whose purpose is to define standards and quality in assessment centres (DSA-QAG 2014). Around the same time the then DfES convened the Working Group to investigate and clarify assessment procedures for SpLDs. Their aim was to enable Local Authorities to achieve consistency in their judgements about who qualified for funding for support: their recommendations had been fully implemented by 2008 (see Introduction for more detail). In 2009, administration of DSA was transferred to Student Finance England (SFE), resulting in detailed national guidelines on the parameters of support for students identified as dyslexic.

Whilst the need for consistency and accountability can be justified (see discussion by Riddell & Weedon 2009), embedded within these administrative procedures, with their concomitant guidance documents, are assumptions about conceptions of dyslexia and philosophies underpinning support for student identified as dyslexic. For example, current SFE guidance documents on the website of the Student Loans Company refer to skills, individual need and the specialist nature of support:

'The costs of extra tutorial support to improve their study skills (e.g. in essay construction and writing, examination techniques, revision skills) would be appropriate for DSAs'

'This specialist support should be tailored to the students' individual needs which will require the specialists delivering the support to set out clear goals and timescales for achieving these goals...' (SFE Guidance 2013-2014:24).

The findings in this study, however, question the concept of writing as a skill and the focus on individual need. These findings suggest a need for on-going negotiation amongst different contextual writing discourses, disciplinary expectations and individual experience, with space for meta-affective and meta-linguistic development as part of the support process. Ganobcsik-Williams (2004) also questions a view of essays as a set of atomised skills. This moves discussion away from a 'within-person problem' towards the context and suggests the need for a broadening in the concept of support rather than one narrowed within the confines of applications for DSA funding.

Of course different perspectives on support have long been discussed. Herrington & Hunter-Carsch (2001) propose a social interactionist model of learning support, which should include the personal qualities of the learners themselves, their past experience, current personal context, the cluster of dyslexic characteristics, educational context and political, social and cultural context. Pollak (2005:147) aligns the models of student writing suggested by Lea & Street (1998) with dyslexia and learning support, suggesting that an academic literacies approach to writing aligns with a social model of dyslexia and an approach to writing support that involves 'analysis of linguistic practices and their social meanings'. ADSHE 'Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Specialist Support for Students with SpLDs in Higher Education' (ADSHE 2009:4) suggest that tutors will 'need to review the development of strategies on an on-going basis as needs emerge' and that the tutorial process is 'a continuous and dynamic process in a student-centred approach' (:7). Although ADSHE retains an emphasis on specialism and the individual, it has recently included on its website the report on a project designed to explore good practice in terms of the theories and philosophies that underpin support (Burwell & Kelly 2013). Burwell & Kelly (2013) subscribe to the work of Herrington (2001) and quote an example from recommendations in a 'Study Aids and Study Strategies Assessment' (usually referred to as 'Needs Assessments') (National Network of Assessment Centres (NNAC) 2008) which place too great an emphasis on study skills. They suggest

the process needs to be 'collaborative, exploratory, investigative and power sharing rather than deficit-laden and technisist. (:18).

It seems that similar tensions prevail in approaches to 'mainstream' writing support, tensions between deficit-laden, remedial approaches and calls for more explicit acknowledgement of the effects of different cultural and contextual expectations for writing. Wingate (2006) considers that 'bolt-on' study skills taught in support centres separate from subject areas are seen as irrelevant by students. In developing a framework for learning to learn, Wingate (2007) argues that in order to write essays students need to learn the underlying epistemology of the discipline and the conventions for constructing knowledge. Hallett (2013) finds that, in terms of their writing development, students valued seminar tasks that encouraged critical thinking and reflective formal and informal analytical debates. They placed less value on technical input from support staff and feedback sessions with academic staff. Jacklin & Robinson (2007) find that, whilst students valued specialist support for practical advice and specialist knowledge of their disability, they valued even more the opportunity to build interpersonal relationships with academic tutors and students in order to discuss study and writing issues both formally and informally.

In terms of the support for students identified as dyslexic and in the light of the findings in this study, these dilemmas raise tensions between specialist and inclusive approaches and emphasise the difficulty of identifying the boundaries between them. We do not know enough about how practitioners working with students identified as dyslexic negotiate discussion of cultural writing requirements, meta-affective and meta-linguistic development and specialist approaches (see ADSHE 2009). We do not know how far we are pulled towards the discourse of skills and individual deficit by the demands of accessing funding: further research would be welcome. This study suggests that an approach that blends an explicit awareness of cultural writing practices with meeting specialist needs would be of most benefit. Situating the students in this study within an academic literacies framework, rather than within a disability framework, revealed much shared ground with the dilemmas faced by all student writers. It might be argued that an inclusive approach to developing writing reduces the risk of attributing to dyslexia difficulties that may originate in cultural writing practices. It may also help to

pinpoint those with extreme dyslexia-related problems needing further support.

A further advantage of an inclusive approach is that it might encourage wider take-up of support amongst students identified as dyslexic. It is a recognised phenomenon that students 'appear' at a point of crisis when they could have benefited from regular sessions at an earlier stage. One of the questions about support (see 'Voices of Support' in Chapter 4) relates to the importance of enabling students to understand the nature of their writing dilemmas and the effects of their dyslexia. Ruth, for example, was uncertain whether her difficulties were the same as those experienced by everyone, or if they were related to dyslexia. They appeared to be a mixture of both and a more inclusive approach to writing support may have been more enabling for her. At an institutional level, this suggests a disadvantage of positioning dyslexia within a disability framework where writing development is concerned. If students do not see themselves as 'disabled' they may be reluctant to identify with disability services (Roberts et al. 2009; Weedon & Riddell 2007).

(ii) For future research

A number of implications for future research have arisen, both in terms of areas of research and of methodology. As well as the need for more work on the relationship between higher level writing and dyslexia, it seems that future studies should attend to real-world writing. The purpose of much of the existing research is to establish difference between dyslexic and non-dyslexic writers for the purpose of assessment and accommodation and artificial writing situations are created in empirical studies. The limitations of this were discussed in section 2.1.3 of the literature review. The small amount of research into coursework is of interest and further work could, for example, include comparison of coursework and exam scripts from the same writers. This would be more informative if large-scale 'counting' exercises were avoided in preference for a focus on content and structure, incorporating local and global coherence. It might also include comparison of lower level errors. Contextual elements could also be explored, such as different expectations between coursework and exam writing, and different

assessment criteria. This kind of research could contribute to understanding the basis for differential marking (e.g. use of stickers on exam scripts) when writing under different conditions.

A further research implication arises from the suggestion that more detailed understanding is needed of the ways that writers identified as dyslexic attempt to organise their writing at local and global levels. It seems that greater cross-referencing between the general literature on writing and the literature on dyslexia would be beneficial. The study has shown the importance of embedding dyslexic essay writers within a theory of academic writing. It has also shown the connections with cognitively based approaches to writing. It is possible that studies in this area would be of benefit to understanding the processes of dyslexic writers, such as the work on verbal rehearsal (Chenoweth & Hayes 2003). It is this kind of work at the level of sentence composition that is under-explored in relation to dyslexia. However, it would be important to establish the most productive methodological approach for capturing the process in a meaningful way (see my reflections below).

Some possible areas of research arising from this study have already been suggested, such as issues surrounding support (see Discussion Chapter 4.3) and the possibility that particular features in a dyslexic profile may make difficulty more likely (see Discussion Chapter 5.1). However, it is important to acknowledge the problem of isolating a 'purely' cognitive difficulty. For example, word finding difficulty might arise from lack of language experience, which could occur for cultural and/or dyslexia-related reasons and may also be inhibited by lack of clarity within the context. Or the predominant reason may be cognitive difficulties related to dyslexia. The important factors with concentration seem to be why some were more effective than others in managing difficulty rather than 'diagnosing' the cause. Methodologies that acknowledge social factors within the context are therefore also important.

6.3 Reflection

Overall, my attempt to embed these writers into a social practice approach to academic writing succeeded in making visible how individual

and contextual dynamics interact within essay writing. This suggests a move in thinking beyond sometimes over-simplified cognitive associations with dyslexia. At the same time, the study successfully acknowledged other research perspectives and remained theoretically coherent. The study also succeeded in revealing in detail individual constellations of writing and dyslexia related issues. The coding framework developed to achieve this further offers a tool for practitioners that might help to organise the myriad thoughts that enter a tutor's mind as they work with students on their writing. This could enable more effective analysis and evaluation in discussion with them.

A number of questions were also raised, some of which I had considered from the outset. The sample size is small, but, at the same time, this enabled an in-depth analysis. Other concerns include whether it should be viewed as a limitation that the study was conducted in a 'traditional' university where students have to achieve high 'A' level grades for entry to the subject areas involved in the study. My decision not to include 'struggling' writers from a different setting has already been discussed in the Methodology. I maintain this position as I feel the study demonstrated that essay writing is not a benign, unproblematic activity even for the most able and it was valuable to show this. The setting also raised questions about the term 'compensated dyslexic': the analysis revealed the additional time and emotional investment necessary to meet requirements for all those identified as dyslexic.

I was similarly concerned about the fact that the non-dyslexic participants were mainly high-achieving highly motivated students. However, within this group, there was variation in approach, in self-perceptions and in relationships with the context. They therefore provided an appropriate base-line by which to judge whether dilemmas were shared and confirmed the individuality of experience amongst all the students. It would nevertheless be of great interest to conduct a similar study either outside the Humanities faculty or in a different kind of university.

A further concern was that one of my chosen methods was disappointing in the results it revealed. This was the analysis of evolving texts. These provided rich data on how essays developed in terms of structure and

content, but did not reveal the extent of struggle with language composition. Most writers tended not to produce unsatisfactory text that was later refined; they appeared to aim for the best that was possible at each input and adjustments were minor. On-going composing processes were therefore not captured. This suggests that a different methodology would be necessary. Think aloud protocols are possible, though their limitations have been discussed already in the Literature Review (see Research methodology in the Conclusion to the Literature Review). Identifying dyslexic writers for whom this works well may be possible. Price (2006) used a recorded bleep as a prompt for writers to select the actions in which they were engaged from a pre-determined list. This is more structured, but possibly too prescriptive to fully explore sentence composition processes. In this study, most revealing were the students' own descriptions of how they approached spelling and sentence composition and the value of these descriptions cannot be underestimated.

From my own perspective as a researcher and academic support tutor, the study succeeded in organising in my mind both philosophically and practically the many different ideas and possibilities presented by this group when working on their writing. It also allowed me to integrate more satisfactorily the competing theoretical approaches within my work. In addition, in writing about writing, I could apply many of the concepts to myself as a writer and became aware of the development of my own writing voice during the process. Finally, I became even more aware of the close proximity of the research and support roles. Overlaps between the roles were unavoidable. There were occasions when it was clear that I needed to adopt a support stance and I am confident that this did not have a negative effect on the research. Conversely, the research process sometimes afforded support, when research questions prompted the articulation of problems and brought them into conscious awareness (e.g. Ruth and Adam). In general, I am confident that the setting of the study and my role within it enhanced the quality of interview exchanges.

Overall, I hope that the study contributes to a broadening of thinking about HE student essay writers identified as dyslexic. Viewing them as writers in context on the same terms as other essay writers revealed in detail the different interactions between their dyslexia and issues shared

by all student essay writers. This perspective displayed not only 'problems' but also the interest and creative problem-solving that these students brought to the task. I hope also that the study is an acknowledgement of the breadth and depth of the work done by support tutors and students in the negotiation involved in the writing of an academic essay.

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Appendix 1

Example definitions of dyslexia

International Dyslexia Association

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

Adopted by the Board of Directors: November 12, 2002

(www.interdys.org/Factsheets accessed 12 April 2012)

Reid (2009:4)

Dyslexia is a processing difference, often characterised by difficulties in literacy acquisition affecting reading, writing and spelling. It can also have an impact on cognitive processes such as memory, speed of processing, time management, co-ordination and automaticity. There may be visual and/or phonological difficulties and there are usually some discrepancies in educational performances.

There will [be] individual differences and individual variation and it is therefore important to consider learning styles and the learning and work context when planning intervention and accommodations.

SpLD Working Group (2005)

Dyslexia is a combination of abilities and difficulties; the difficulties affect the learning process in aspects of literacy and sometimes numeracy. Coping with required reading is generally seen as the biggest challenge at Higher Education level due in part to difficulty in skimming and scanning written material. A student may also have an inability to express his/her ideas clearly in written form and in a style appropriate to the level of study. Marked and persistent weaknesses may be identified in working memory, speed

of processing, sequencing skills, auditory and/or visual perception, spoken language and motor skills. Visuo-spatial skills, creative thinking and intuitive understanding are less likely to be impaired and indeed may be outstanding. Enabling or assistive technology is often found to be very beneficial.

British Psychological Society (1999)

Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. The BPS comment that This focuses on literacy learning at the 'word level' and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching.

Rose review of dyslexia and literacy difficulties (Rose 2009)

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.

Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.

Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.

It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.

Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.

A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.

McLoughlin, Leather & Stringer (2002:15)

Our practice in assessment, counselling teaching and training has for some years been based on an assumption that all the primary difficulties experienced by dyslexic people stem from an inefficiency in their working memory.

Cooper (2006 in Pavey, Meehan & Waugh 2010:2)

We would argue that dyslexia is an experience that arises out of natural human diversity on the one hand and a world on the other where the early learning of literacy and good personal organisation and working memory is mistakenly used as a marker of 'intelligence'. The problem here is seeing difference incorrectly as 'deficit'.

Appendix 2

Essay Writing Research: Information for Prospective Participants

Thank you for taking an interest in my research on essay writing. The research aims to understand more about how students identified as dyslexic write essays, but to do this it needs to understand more about the essay writing process of both dyslexic and non-dyslexic students.

Essays are an important part of assessment in most universities, yet there is little research into the essay writing of dyslexic students. Your contribution is therefore important, whether you are dyslexic or not, and would be very much appreciated.

How much time?

Your involvement would make some additional demands on your time while you are writing one essay. You decide which essay this should be. I envisage this will be approximately 2 hours additional to your normal study time. In return, you will have the opportunity to discuss your essay writing strategies and receive feedback and suggestions, including detailed discussion of the essay in question. Your contribution will be positively recognized in the research write-up, including your being named as an active participant, if you wish. You can of course choose to remain anonymous if you prefer. There is **no** assumption that you have problems with essays – I am interested in how and why you do what you do when writing.

What is involved?

- **An initial interview** to discuss your thoughts and feelings about writing in general and essay writing in particular, including your current strategies. If you are identified as dyslexic, the interview would also include discussion of your experience of being dyslexic. If you are not identified as dyslexic the interview would include discussion of your previous experience of learning. We would also need to confirm that you are not dyslexic and any discussion involving this would be explained clearly to you at all times.
- **An interview** to discuss your thoughts about a current essay at the point when you are ready to start writing. (This may be combined with the first interview, depending on the stage you are at.)
- **Submission of drafts** as they stand after each writing session. This would just involve e-mailing to me.
- **Submission of the final version.**
- **A final discussion of the essay and the research process** after you have finished. This may be before or after you hand it in, according to your preference and the pressure of deadlines.

Who am I?

I am an experienced Study Support Tutor, currently working in Academic Support, mainly with dyslexic students, at the University of Nottingham. I have worked with many students, dyslexic and non-dyslexic, on their writing and have a particular interest in this area.

What happens to the data?

I would like to record interviews. These would be transcribed by me, and discussed with my supervisor, Dr Do Coyle, Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, University of Nottingham. I will also analyse essay drafts and the final version. All data will be stored securely in a manner that conforms to the Data Protection Act. Your anonymity is guaranteed, unless you wish to be identified as an active participant in the research.

Permission

You will be asked to give written permission for participating in the research and for the recording of interviews. If you have already been to Academic Support, giving your permission for the above does not include permission to use information from your file, including your dyslexia assessment report or screening. This would be requested specifically and separately if information from these would enhance our understanding of the data.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. Do contact me if you are able to participate.

My contact details are:

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Academic Support
Christine.carter@nottingham.ac.uk
Room C9
Portland Building
University Park
Nottingham
NG7 2RD

Telephone: 0115 8468046
Email:

Essay Writing Research: Permission Sheet

I have read the information on the essay writing research and agree to participate. I agree to the recording of interviews.

I would like to be named as an active participant in the research.
Yes/No

I would like to remain anonymous. Yes/No

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix 3a

Initial Interview guide

Dyslexia:

- History:
- Feelings: past, present, changes
- Responses to and from educational context, peers, family
- Effects on Learning, approaches to learning, motivation, attitudes to assessment.
- Strategies: examples, awareness of them, taught, self

Were you conscious of things you found difficult or things you could do more easily than others. Did you feel different from your friends?

What about your family?

What about teachers? How did you react at school? Were you motivated, keen to pass exams, confident?

Did it change at different stages?

Were you conscious of having coping strategies?

What about since your dyslexia has been identified. Has it made any difference? Have you told others?

Writing:

Affective

- Confidence with the material.
- Feelings about own writing, voice, register
- Motivation to do best possible, good enough, engagement with task, assessment
- Willingness to put time in to solve problems
- Emotions - anxiety levels, getting started, moving from stage to stage, finishing.
- Attentional overload, concentration, work patterns

Would you say you can enjoy writing? How do you approach it? Is it the same for all kinds of writing?

How do you feel when you are in the midst of an essay? Are you happy with good enough, or do you aim to achieve the best? Can you get stuck a particular stage?

What is your concentration like? How long can you work at a stretch?

Social

- Rhetorical knowledge: how to argue, different kinds of argument
- Awareness of what context, discipline, tutors require
- Awareness of audience
- Awareness of what kind of language is required
- Writing voice, and required register for the context
- Conventions, understanding of why

Are you clear about what is expected?

Do you have a good understanding of what tutors want?

Do you know what archaeology essays want?
Do you have an audience in mind as you write? How aware of assessment are you?
How do you feel about all the things you are expected to do in academic writing, such as referencing?

Strategic

- Metacognitive awareness
- Restructuring, redrafting, revision
- Strategies for sentence structure, punctuation, spelling.
- Time Management, time spent,
- Learn from process of writing an essay.
- Support accessed

Tell me about how you tackle an essay. You have the title and are ready to start. Take me through what you do.
What are you trying to do when you plan? Can you get a structure? How would you define structure? How do you know when you have got it?
How do you deal with spelling and punctuation?
Does anyone look at your essays? At what stage? What kinds of things do they look for?

Linguistic

- Global links: awareness of them, how they develop
- Sentence structure and linking
- Language awareness: sensitivity, ability to change, vocabulary
- Satisfaction that what written represents what want to say

What about the kind of language? Are you confident about using the right kind of words, that you are writing as expected?
Do sentences say what you want to say? Do you do a lot of editing and changing as you go? What are you trying to do?

Content/Knowledge base

- Reading and researching. Lot of subject knowledge or struggling to obtain enough.
- Retrieving knowledge as writing. Use of notes
- Retrieving words to express knowledge

Do you feel to get a good grasp of the material? How do you use it in the essay? Do you develop your own ideas? How do you deal with this? How do you use your notes when you are doing the essay?

Appendix 3b

Initial Interview Guide: Students not identified as dyslexic

Explain need to establish that they are not dyslexic:

Discuss what they know about dyslexia
Can be unaware
Need not follow up if preferred
Will abandon research if suggested

Explain Vinegrad checklist

Ask them to fill in
Discuss outcome

Learning History:

Attitudes to and experience of school at different stages
Motivation
Relationship with teachers
Importance of peers, family
Self-perception as a learner
Attitudes/approaches to assessment situations
Awareness of strategies

Tell me about your time at school

Writing

As for those identified as dyslexic

Appendix 3c

Planning interview guide

Essay title

How do you set about analysing the title? How does the title help you?
How do you understand this title? Do you know the answer to the question?

Process

What would you do first? How do you break the task down? Do you think about word count or how many words for each section? Do you have an awareness of the time needed?

Content

Do you have ideas of what you are looking for in your reading before you start? Can you recognise what is relevant and what is not? Tell me what this essay is about.

Argument/Structure

What kind of argument is involved in this essay? At what point do you feel as though your argument is developing? How does this happen? Do you know the kinds of ways of arguing that are expected? Do you know how you are going to argue in this essay? How far are you expected to present your own ideas?

Planning strategies

Can you usually identify the key points – the points you know must be in there? How do these emerge?

Do you ever identify a pattern previously used? E.g. this is a 'compare and contrast' essay.

Can you ever identify a pattern, a similarity to other essays, or patterns that tend to reoccur in your subject area?

Do you know how the essay is going to go before you begin writing? Do you have a plan before you start? How detailed is your plan? Does your plan change as you write? Do new ideas come to you? What do you do if that happens?

How ideas are represented – in pictures, abbreviations, mind maps, bullet points, pre-writing?

Appendix 3d

Retrospective Interview guide

- **General queries as appropriate**
 - How did the essay work out?
 - Are you happy with it, or were there any particular problem areas? Did you have enough material that was relevant?
 - Is there anything else you think you should have included or not sure if it is relevant?
 - Did you feel you answered the question?
 - What about how the essay sounds? Are you pleased with the way it's written. Do you have any concerns?
 - What about referencing?
 - Spelling and punctuation?
 - Word count?
 - Time?
- **Go through the essay together**
 - Pick up on any concerns raised in previous interviews
 - Pick up on points I have noticed when I have read the essay

Appendix 4

Vignettes of student essay writers

Adam

Archaeology: dyslexia identified year 1 at university

Self-identity and understanding of expectations

Adam expresses pride in his writing and is enthusiastic about his subject. He is also very positive about the university environment as it allows him to work in ways that suit him. He is confident to express his own opinion in his writing and has a good understanding of how this can be done.

However, he sees himself as someone succeeding only by 'fluke' and retains a sense that he is actually 'stupid'. His past experience of school that he brings to his current situation is described in very negative terms. He describes hating school; he experienced severe early literacy difficulties and just accepted that he was 'stupid'. This led him not to be able to recognise his success as he moved through school and began to achieve well. Having his dyslexia identified is beginning to change these negative perceptions. The way he perceives his own writing in relation to what he thinks is expected is also problematic. He thinks of it as 'small child writing' and has to go back and try to make it sound 'more university'.

Relationships with 'audience', discipline and others

Adam does not have a perception of a reader passing judgement on his writing. He is mainly writing according to the standards he sets himself. He is able to build productive and comfortable relationships with his academic tutors and identifies strongly with his discipline; he is closely involved in a range of activities in his department, such as survey and field work. He accesses informal support from friends and had student services support in his second year, mainly focusing on making his line of thought clear.

Self-management, strategies and difficulties

He describes difficulties in reading, spelling, memory, maintaining concentration, vocabulary and achieving a 'flow' in his writing and is very aware of his areas of difficulty and how they affect him. He is also very positive in his approach to finding solutions: he experiments pro-actively and successfully with software and different ways of working and also has ways of 'creating a comfort zone' for managing his reading and concentration difficulties. He describes himself as a good time manager. The difficulty that remains unresolved is achieving a flow in his writing.

Beth

Archaeology: not identified as dyslexic

Self-identity and understanding of expectations

Beth describes herself as loving her subject and having strong preferences for particular periods of archaeology. Influenced by her positive school experience, she enjoys learning and is motivated to work hard. She reads widely and feels that she knows the topic thoroughly as she is writing. She particularly enjoys essays that allow her to include her own opinions and is confident about how to use the source material to allow her to do this. She has a good awareness of disciplinary requirements. She describes personalising points of argument to make clear it is her opinion and not from the literature. She can discuss the material authoritatively and is focused on achieving a clear line of thought. She describes herself as writing 'fairly automatically' and preferring to read and write texts where the structure is clear. She sees herself as a member of the archaeological world – she is an 'underling' but still has something to contribute.

Relationship with 'audience' discipline and others

Beth does not have a particular reader in mind. She has modelled how she writes on journals. She feels she is more absorbed in the subject than worrying about what mark she will be given. However, at the end she checks that she has 'ticked the boxes' for the structure, the spelling and the grammar, enough case studies and a fluent argument. She feels her awareness has developed through 'trial and error' as little guidance is given. Her response has been to use journals as a pattern because she feels no-one has told her what is expected. She describes how the

lecture on the essay topic may give insight into 'how much she is expected to know'. She is also slightly frustrated at what she perceives as inconsistent feedback about referencing.

Self-management, strategies and difficulties

She is very aware of how she learns best and what her preferences are. These include using mind maps (taught by her dad at an early age), variation in tasks and working with background music as silence is 'too much like exams'. She prefers to highlight text and scribble notes on photocopies as making notes feels like wasting time. Her awareness of how she develops the structure of her essays is very strong. Her flexibility is apparent in the way she has adjusted how she works from the previous year, doing more reading and spending more time thinking about the argument. She relies on dad to read her work and suggest improvements, which include shortening sentences and correcting typing errors. She does not correct them as she writes so that she remains focused on the ideas. She suggests her reliance on dad makes her 'lazy' about these issues.

Ian

Philosophy: not identified as dyslexic

Self-identity and understanding of expectations

Although his experience of school was positive and he achieved well, he questioned the private education system he was in. He wants to be a writer and can adapt his writing style to different settings, but feels that his natural way of writing is alien to what is required in his department and this annoys him. He is now accepting that he must adjust as a 'pragmatic gesture'. Until this point, he has deliberately not made the adjustment. He has a good awareness of what is required in terms of language and the kinds of arguments needed even if he as at some points decided not to follow them. He describes the required writing style as 'clean' and 'without extraneous words'. He feels that originality and clarity in argument are expected and others are possibly better than he is at that. He can manage the material and form structured arguments in his head as he writes and has no problems with spelling and grammar.

Relationship with 'audience', discipline and others

Up until the current year, he wrote in a style that was pleasing to him. He is now writing with assessment in mind and is consulting the mark scheme in the school handbook. He sees the audience for his writing as 'an anonymous person with a red pen, who is going to judge me'. He strongly dislikes this, but has decided that his results matter to him and he does not want to 'let his parents down'. He has had little contact with his tutor, only meeting to receive exam results.

Self-management, strategies and difficulties

Ian deliberately reduces the work load, as he chooses to do other writing activities; he describes keeping reading to a minimum and does not start essays until 'two or three days before the deadline'. He is very aware of how he works, but is uncertain at this point whether his different approach will succeed in terms of achieving higher marks. He has achieved firsts in the Cultural Studies department, but his marks in philosophy range from 40s to 60s.

James

Archaeology: not identified as dyslexic

Self-identity and understanding of expectations

James describes his school experience in positive terms. He enjoyed school, was self-motivated to work hard and always did well academically. He has continued in this vein at university. He is interested in his subject and can become very involved in his essays. At the same time, he recognises that he could do more work but he is happy with his marks, (mid 2:1) and chooses not to. He has a good understanding of what an archaeology essay is trying to achieve; he experienced a difference in writing archaeology and philosophy essays and could articulate what that difference was: that archaeology was identifying and combining relevant sources in order to come up with your own ideas, whereas philosophy was more about expressing ideas in your own terms. He feels strongly that his writing should be enjoyable to read and be clear and coherent. He describes himself as a 'bit of a perfectionist' over this. He is confident in his understanding of appropriate language use and in his capacity to write in a structured way. He is aware of the balance between his own opinion and that of his sources and of what is

permissible in his subject area, though he says that this can vary a little depending on the lecturer. He has become more aware in his third year of the need to critically analyse.

Relationship with 'audience', discipline and others

On the whole, he sees his audience for his writing as an 'examiner' and he tries to work out 'what the examiner is looking for', mainly based on the title. However, he describes a specific example of being inspired by a particular tutor. He generally finds his tutors approachable and willing to discuss queries with him. He can relate to his subject in ways that will stay with him but it is a route to obtaining a degree rather than a career.

Self-management, strategies and difficulties

James is in control of the language requirements and aware of his strategies. He sometimes spends time re-wording sentences to improve the clarity of important points but feels that it comes 'naturally' to write in the required way. He colour coded his notes according to different sections of the essay and keeps careful track of all his references. He is able to develop a structure as he is reading and making notes. Occasionally, if he cannot see a way forward, he writes by hand as a stimulus for improving the quality of his thinking.

Jenny

Archaeology: dyslexia identified year 2 at university

Self-identity and understanding of expectations

There are a number of conflicting aspects to how Jenny identifies herself. She experiences severe difficulties with sustaining a focus on her essays and therefore puts off starting. She describes being easily bored and always doing essays at the very last minute, during the night or on the day of the deadline. She flits from one task to another and is easily distracted once she does start. She intensely dislikes writing essays and thinks of her writing as 'rubbish'. She describes being afraid to look through it because it will be 'all wrong'. However, in spite of this she achieves marks in the 2:1 range. She has little confidence in her own writing voice, assuming that, if she has an idea, she must have read it somewhere and therefore always finds a reference for it.

She does not acknowledge that having her dyslexia identified has had any impact on her; it has made no difference to her work patterns or how she writes. At school, she had extra help from a tutor with essays and with this help achieved A grades. She describes disliking school. She did not identify with the values of her schoolmates and so did not have friends, but she wanted to achieve well enough to go to a 6th form college. Once there, her marks dropped, but she attributed this to fitting in more and having more of a social life. Her dyslexia was identified at university when a tutor noted a large number of spelling and grammar errors. Jenny attributed this to the fact that she could not bring herself to read through her work and she was always so short of time.

Relationship with 'audience', discipline and others

Jenny has no sense of a reader as she is writing, and is 'just aiming for a mark in the 60s', but she does not know or cannot articulate what she does to achieve this. She broadens her reading to 'get more viewpoints so that I meet the word count'. She appears critical of her tutors' approach to 'reasonable adjustments' and does not understand how this works. However, in spite of her aversion to essays, she enjoys the practical aspects of her subject, has worked on several projects in holidays and sees herself as following a career in archaeology. She also enjoys expressing opinions in seminars.

Self-management, strategies and difficulties

Jenny has very little awareness of how she writes. She describes herself as working in quite a haphazard way, skim reading and slotting in ideas as she finds them. She describes having no control over this, but always comes back to the point that her marks are good. Sometimes, when writing at the last minute, she can write for 'six hours without a break'. She describes in vivid terms her difficulties in finding words and with short term memory. She also says that she cannot multi-task. She appears to have no awareness of strategies for dealing with these issues.

Liam

Philosophy: dyslexia identified age 6 yrs

Self-identity and understanding of expectations

Liam identifies himself strongly as a writer and is confident of his own position and of what is expected. He has a good understanding of the concept of argument in his subject and the requirement for having a balance between independent thought and 'depth' through engaging with the reading. He sees himself as being able to express complex ideas clearly and enjoys finding succinct forms of expression. He can compile the argument in his head, so the essay is formulated before he begins to write. However, he realises the possible need for changes in his approach as requirements change from 1000 to 3000 word essays.

Liam considers his dyslexia to be 'just part of who I am and part of how I read and write and think'. It was identified when he was aged 6 and he was always considered 'smart' and 'articulate' with good ideas. He does not consider that being dyslexic held him back and he did not feel different because of it. He found the support he received in the early years useful and still draws on spelling strategies.

Relationship with 'audience, discipline and others

He does not have a person in mind when writing, but tries to make judgements about clarity and the quality of argument and is writing it according to his own judgements. He feels he has a place in the philosophy department – he has the confidence to say 'this is what I think' and he is confident in his own values. He is not interested in sounding academic for its own sake. He thinks that the ways that suit him to read and write are what is needed in philosophy. He has been complimented by his tutors on his ability to express complex ideas in a straightforward way.

He has not accessed support regularly since primary school, but he lets people know he is dyslexic and arranges to have extra time in exams and has accessed Disabled Students' Allowances.

Self-management, strategies and difficulties

He describes reading as his most difficult area and considers that he spends two thirds of the time of producing an essay on the reading. He needs to 'talk in his head' as he reads, so it can be slow, but 'that is good for philosophy'. The main difficulty is with concentration when reading and some days his eyes hurt. He is able to recognise this and take control, though he was not aware of it as a possible effect of dyslexia. He might 'watch seven hours of DVDs and go out with my mates' when he planned to read as he recognises that he would be wasting his time if conditions are not right. At other times he can 'get into a zone' and read intensely for long periods. He feels he writes as he speaks and he can write clearly so long as he does not think about referencing and spelling. He uses software that reads back his essay to help him correct errors that involve a correctly spelled but wrong word.

Rachel

History: not identified as dyslexic

Self-identity and understanding of expectations

Rachel describes her schooling as encouraging a strong work ethic and independent ways of learning. She responded well to this and was a high achiever. She felt well prepared for the ways of learning at university in comparison with some of her peers.

She becomes very involved in the subject of the essay and particularly enjoys the research. She likes to feel she has 'covered all the bases' in her reading and feels authoritative on the subject. She thinks she often finds 'an innovative point of view'. She plans and structures in detail and says that the essay is formulated before she begins to write. Her marks are in the first class degree range.

She has adapted how she writes essays according to her developing experience and changing contextual expectations from one year to the next. She thinks she has changed how she writes from 'hitting the points' in the first year to a 'real critical engagement' by the third year. She feels that the emphasis on how you include your own opinion varies from tutor to tutor but she has a good awareness of 'picking holes in the literature'. She describes herself as 'careful to include condensed and

select language' and uses journals as a pattern, but she has always written in 'quite an elevated way'.

Relationship with 'audience', discipline and others

She sees her audience as 'an interested reader' rather than just writing as expected. She relates to the marker for this essay as someone who enters into the debates and encourages her enthusiasm for the topic.

Rachel is less confident about the kind of language expected. In the previous year, she had been told that her style was not academic enough, but she did not really understand why. She therefore tried to emulate the style of journals. Her confidence had been undermined further during the course of the current essay. She had received recent feedback from the marker of this essay, suggesting that her style was too convoluted and she should try to write more succinctly. This left her unsure whether this was just this tutor's personal preference (she had not received this feedback from anyone else) or whether there were real problems with her style.

Self-management, strategies and difficulties

Her sense of awareness and control over her writing are strong. She plans the essay and manages her notes in a detailed organised way. She refines her writing as she writes rather than redrafting and editing and feels it is a long process; she is confident about spelling and grammar. She works out the progression from one idea to another 'on instinct' after all the reading and planning is done. She was able to adapt her language to the tutor's expectation in response to feedback.

She experiences high levels of stress particularly before exams. She recognises it as 'irrational', but thinks 'it's the fear of the unknown and what if such and such a question pops up, and what if I have a mind blank or I can't express myself.' She also is anxious in course work that she is doing what is expected.

Rob

Archaeology/History: dyslexia identified year 2 at university

Self-identity and understanding of expectations

Rob describes himself as always satisfied with his essays and describes his marks as '2:1 mediocrity, 61/62'. He enjoys discussing ideas in his writing and is good at making abstract links. He thinks he does not write essays 'in the same way that most people do'. He describes writing an outline quite quickly from the basic reading and gradually adding to it as his reading develops.

He has a good understanding of what is required and has 'picked it up as I go along'. He sees opinion in archaeology as always open to change and therefore archaeology essays give more scope than history to express his own opinion, which he thinks tutors want. He has a good understanding of how to use the literature as the basis for his ideas and is confident about claiming knowledge of 'outside concepts'. He says he tends to 'write as I speak' and it might not 'be the right sort of language they want you to write'.

His dyslexia was identified when difficulties with grammar were pointed out by a tutor after he submitted an essay that had not been checked by his girl-friend. He sees 'only the advantages' of having his dyslexia identified and it has not held him back. His positive approach may have been influenced by his school experience. He enjoyed school and was 'a bright pupil'. He did not read much and his handwriting was not good but teachers did not identify him as having any difficulties. He thinks this was because he was viewed as an able student. He is not sure exactly what dyslexia is, 'it can be almost anything to do with learning', but he understands how it affects him. He recognises the practical advantages of having 25% extra time in exams to allow more time for planning and having dyslexia flagged up in the marking of his course work. He does not feel that he has been 'looked down on' because of it.

Relationships with 'audience', discipline and others

Rob sees his audience as an assessor. He feels that to some extent the essay is 'quite contrived'. He describes including tables because he

knows the tutor likes them rather than because he finds them helpful himself. He has found working out what tutors want much easier now that teaching groups are smaller. He also adjusts essay content by 'looking out for which points the lecturer seems to emphasise'. He has occasionally achieved marks in the 70s range, but does not know why and cannot replicate.

Self-management, strategies and difficulties

Rob experiences difficulty with maintaining his attention while reading and has been prescribed tinted glasses. He cannot read for long periods and can become bored after writing the basic core of the essay. He is unable to spot errors such as missing words and punctuation and his sentences can be too long. He manages his difficulties by being very strategic and controlled. He tightly manages the volume of reading and interleaves his reading and writing. He also has closely controlled ways of managing the notes. He is a regular user of support services to improve his ability to spot errors. As a result he is more aware of patterns of errors and knows what to look out for. He also uses informal support from his girl-friend. He dislikes having to stop either to retrieve a word or think how to spell it, and so highlights it and comes back to it.

Ruth

History: identified as dyslexic aged 17

Self-identity as writer and understandings of requirements

Ruth describes herself as loving school and 'just a normal student'. Difficulties with her essays at school were put down to 'the way I was, just my style of learning'. She worked hard, probably harder than her friends for lower marks, but enjoyed the work. She also consciously learned spellings, but did not see this as unusual. At AS level, structure problems with her essays became more apparent. Ruth thinks that this was because her coping strategies were no longer adequate for the kinds of essays she had to write. Being identified as dyslexic at first felt like 'a permanent hurdle' as opposed to the general hurdles that all students have to deal with, but she now feels better about it and it is just part of who she is. She accessed extra time in exams and Disabled Students Allowances on arrival at university, but not regular support.

She is enthusiastic about her subject and can get very involved in the essay topic. She enjoys reading widely and being able to make lots of connections between ideas. However, she can interpret things 'in obscure ways' and become side-tracked. She feels she is good at making analytical points and finding 'new evidence'. She describes 'writing herself into the essay' to work out what she thinks. She thinks that she writes in 'quite unusual ways' and 'makes things more complicated than necessary'. She says this may be why her 'points don't shine'. She feels she can write in the expected academic style, but she says that her sentences can 'get masked and merried in a tanglement'. She also finds it difficult to know how to state what she thinks.

Relationship with 'audience', discipline and others

She sees her audience as a 'marker' and thinks the fact that her essays are not 'streamlined' makes it difficult for markers to understand her meaning. She also perceives the marking as very subjective. She quite frequently goes to see her tutors and her marks have improved since doing so. However, she describes a conversation with her tutor as 'reading between the lines' or 'he didn't want to say too much'. Working it out is 'just the trick of the game'. She tries hard to adjust her ways of working to changing demands.

Self-management, strategies and difficulties

She is aware of areas of difficulty and is open to adapting her ways of working according to her changing understandings. For example, she thinks she has been too focused on content and not enough on how the question indicates the structure of the essay. This may be why she makes more notes than necessary. It is possible, however, that she needs to make notes in order to fully take in the reading. She is currently trying to structure her reading according to the question and work out the argument more clearly before she begins writing. She sends all her essays to her dad, who helps to clarify the meaning of her sentences and tells her if the structure is not clear.

Sophie

Archaeology: identified as dyslexic year 1 at university

Self-identity and understanding of expectations

Sophie has little confidence in herself as a writer and describes intensely disliking writing essays. She prefers the practical aspects of archaeology, such as drawing and photography. She could speak knowledgeably about the material, but could not recognise this as she was so concerned about referencing and writing.

She describes herself as getting distracted easily and putting off starting. She wants to improve her marks in her second year, but she is uncertain about what is required.

She has no confidence in expressing her own opinion. She thinks there is no point in including a point if you cannot reference it. She is particularly anxious about having enough references as she is unsure how to access material in journals. She prefers reading from web pages, but thinks her department do not like too many web references. She is never sure what is relevant so finds she reads and notes material unnecessarily.

She thinks her own language is not good enough, but at the same time questions why long words need to be used when shorter ones are adequate. She sometimes does not understand the wording of the essay title. She is happy with technical words, 'it is just the English type ones'. She struggles to meet the word count and 'pads out' the wording. She finds it difficult to develop a clear structure and says her sentences and paragraphs sound 'stumbling' and 'dt...dt...dt...'.

She has little understanding of her dyslexia and the suggestion of it was unexpected. She describes being easily bored and distracted, but has no memories of particular literacy difficulties. At A level she had extra tuition from an external tutor as she was getting behind and struggling with terminology. She found this helpful and learned useful strategies for organising her essays. She describes never finishing exams. Her dyslexia assessment came about after she discussed with a tutor visual difficulties that were affecting her reading but she makes no association between dyslexia and the kind of difficulties she experiences.

Relationships with 'audience', discipline and others

In general, Sophie perceives some of her tutors as not approachable because of 'the way they present themselves'. She sees her reader as the marker but has 'no idea how they mark it. If I get a crap mark it just means I haven't done it right'. She also feels that her tutors all mark differently and give different information, for example, on what an introduction should include or how references should be done. She feels she can lose marks without realising what she is doing wrong and whatever she does it will be 'red-penned'. She has difficulty in fully understanding the title and this feels as though her tutors are testing her and she will not be able to do it.

In terms of language requirements, she sees herself as just 'writing for uni, it has to be good and concise', but she is uncertain about how this should be and feels that her writing is 'a bit basic for what they want it to be'.

Self-management, strategies and difficulties

Sophie feels to have very little sense of control of what is expected, nor of her ability to do it. She has some helpful strategies but does not recognise them. For example, to get started, she copies key quotes from the books and categorises them. She finds it easier to have them all on one page than to 'have to keep searching in the books'. She handwrites on one side of the page and has everything spread out in front of her and so that she can 'see it all' and try and 'match across' what the books are saying.

Suzanne

Archaeology/Classics: dyslexia identified year 2 at university

Self-identity and understanding of expectations

Suzanne shows a mixed pattern in how she identifies herself as a learner and writer. She feels that she was bullied at school because she was in lower sets than her friends and that her teachers thought she was 'thick'. She thinks teachers did not do enough to help her. However, she did not buy into their perception of her. Because of strong encouragement at home, she retained a belief that she was not 'thick'. She later achieved

well and was encouraged by the fact that she was good at Art and won prizes for her poetry.

Once at university, she describes it as 'a bit of a kick' that she does not achieve good marks for essays. She retains a pro-active approach to her learning, which is all the more discouraging as she does not understand why she cannot improve. She sees having her dyslexia identified as explaining what happened at school and confirming that she is not 'thick', but just had some problems with learning. She sees it as a turning point for addressing what is happening.

She becomes anxious and stressed when writing essays. 'They just suppose that because you're, you know, at university, or things like that, you automatically know how to... what is expected in an essay and that is where I fall short completely'. She prefers to write 'in bullet points' and cannot write in 'sophisticated sort of language'. She cannot find the words to express what she wants to say and describes her writing as 'sounding awful, just a jumble of words not going anywhere'. She has days, however, when this improves. She also says 'it takes me a long time to understand aspects and it normally clicks half way through the essay'. This can make her essays patchy, to the point where she has been accused of plagiarism. 'Your final mark depends on whether you are having a good day or a bad day'.

She perceives that she is supposed to have thirty books on the reference list, which she cannot achieve. Where possible, she chooses a familiar topic in order to reduce the reading time. This is evident in the authoritative way with which she can discuss the topic. She knows how she wants to address the question.

Relationship with 'audience', discipline and others

Suzanne perceives her audience as an assessor, whom she has to 'please' and to whom she needs to demonstrate her understanding. She tries to do this by noting the points emphasised in lectures and demonstrating knowledge from her reading. However, she is confused by feedback that suggests she has included irrelevant material. She does not feel a part of her discipline; she is learning only what is needed for writing essays and exams and could not consider archaeology as a

career. She is confident in approaching her tutors and is in some ways positive about their attempts to help. However, she feels that they do not give her enough information about what she is supposed to be doing in an essay. Her mum and her boyfriend are sources of support.

Self-management, strategies and difficulties

Areas of difficulty described by Suzanne are finding appropriate words and achieving a 'flow' in her writing. She is frustrated at her spelling errors. She has a good awareness of her difficulties, but feels powerless to address them, which is a source of great frustration and stress. She attributes this partly to her own shortcomings and partly to the lack of help from her tutors. She thinks it suits her best to be told what she has to know and then to read at her own pace and make 'little diagrams' to sort it out in her own way.

Appendix 5

Analysis of texts identified as 'difficult' for the reader

Ruth: evolving changes and final text

Analysis of the position of given and new information

Version 3

One of the earliest works on the history of childhood and children is *Centuries of Childhood*, the famous work by Aries, in which childhood was something discovered by the --- ages. *This idea, childhood being something which was discovered* has been criticised in itself, but has also been criticised as it goes against the idea that attitudes are something which are developed over time and are something of a gradual process. *Connotations of discovery* suggest an abrupt arrival of the child being viewed as pure and that *opinions of this kind* were unique to the nineteenth century and thus were rapidly assimilated and accepted throughout society. *Developments surrounding the child* are evolutionary not revolutionary, *suggestions of child purity* were the climax of thought and theory sparked before the nineteenth century and thus not unique to it.

Version 4

One of the earliest works on the history of changing attitudes towards childhood and children is *Centuries of Childhood*, the famous work by Aries, in which childhood was something discovered after the Middle Ages. *The idea of childhood being something which was discovered* has been criticised due to an acceptance that attitudes and thought undergo gradual change, *attitudes toward children* are something which are built upon and developed. *Connotations of discovery* suggest an abrupt arrival of the child being viewed as pure which would have to have been facilitated by a rapid assimilation and acceptance of a new way of thinking. *This theory* always suggests that opinions of this kind were unique to the nineteenth century, that *no other previous suggestion* of childhood purity and innocence were present before the Victorian age.

Version 7

One of the earliest works on the history of changing attitudes towards childhood and children is *Centuries of Childhood*, the famous work by Aries, in which childhood was something discovered after the Middle Ages. *The idea of childhood being discovered* has been criticised as it suggests connotations of an abrupt arrival of the pure child whereby ideas would have had to have been accepted from the offset and rapidly assimilation. *Through evidence which demonstrates contemporary evidence*, such as artwork, literature and legislation to name a few, it can be seen that changing attitudes were gradual; *attitudes towards children* are something which are built upon and developed. Furthermore *this realisation of a gradual assimilation and acceptance* of new ways of thinking demonstrates that the 'sentimentalization' of children although paramount during the nineteenth century, is based in earlier works.

Version 11

One of the earliest works on the history of changing attitudes towards childhood and children is *Centuries of Childhood*, the famous work by Aries, in which childhood was something discovered after the Middle Ages. *The idea of childhood being discovered* has been criticised as it suggests connotations of an abrupt arrival of attitudes of purity whereby ideas would have had to have been accepted from the offset and rapidly assimilation. *Through contemporary evidence*, such as artwork, literature, ideological works and legislation to name a few, it can be seen that changing attitudes were gradual; attitudes towards children are something which are built upon and developed. *Revisionist historians* therefore advocate a more gradual change in opinion, *ideas* take time to be assimilated, discussed and accepted.

Final (changes made by dad)

One of the earliest works on the history of changing attitudes towards childhood and children is *Centuries of Childhood*, the famous work by Aries, in which he puts forward the concept of childhood as something discovered after the Middle Ages. *This concept* has been criticised as it suggests connotations of an abrupt arrival of attitudes of purity with ideas having to be accepted from the offset and rapidly assimilated. *Through contemporary evidence*, such as artwork, literature, ideological works and legislation to name a few, it can be seen that changing attitudes were in fact developed gradually. *Revisionist historians* therefore advocate a more gradual change in opinion, *ideas* take time to be assimilated be discussed and accepted.

The coloured highlights show patterns of given and new information.

Yellow highlights shows given information appropriately placed.

Turquoise highlights show where it could be said to be inappropriately placed. However, the context for the information is strong, so the effects are not disruptive. It therefore cannot be said that the evolving text is difficult for the reader because of inappropriate positioning of given and new information.

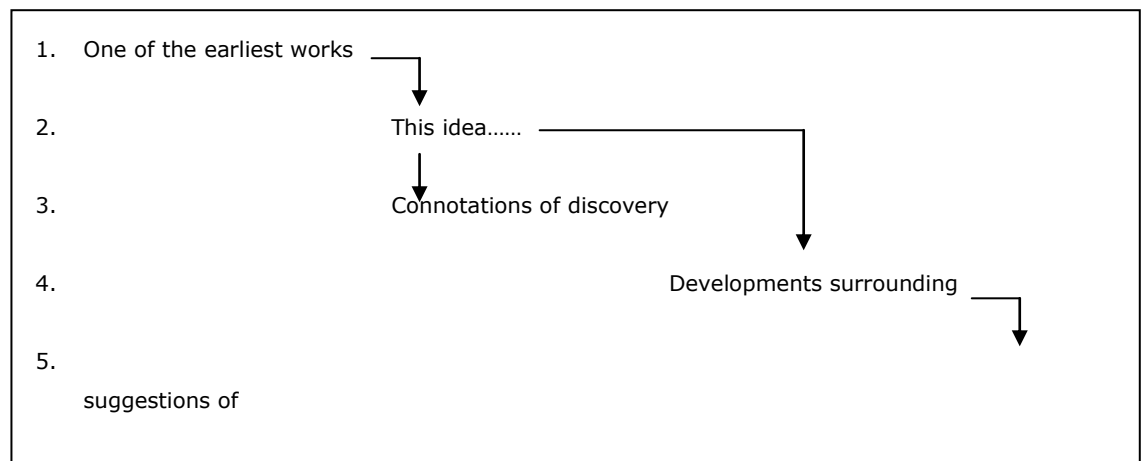
Topical sentence structure analysis

The following shows a topical sentence structure analysis of version 3. It is suggested that a string of parallel topics makes a text less coherent for the reader. Topics in the diagram below are represented as parallel (one below the other) or sequential.

One of the earliest works on the history of childhood and children is *Centuries of Childhood*, the famous work by Aries, in which childhood was something discovered by the --- ages. ***This idea, childhood being something which was discovered*** has been criticised in itself, but has also been criticised as it goes against the idea that attitudes are something which are developed over time and are something of a gradual process.

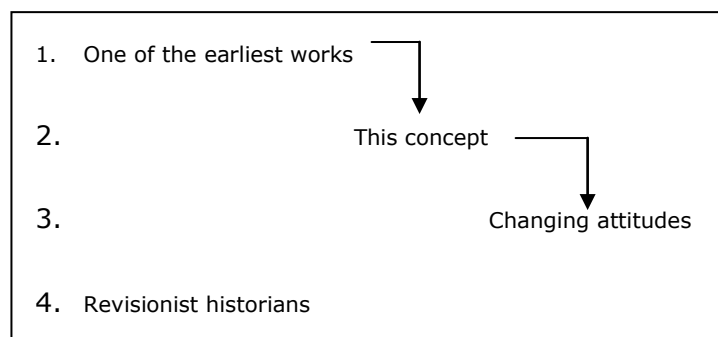
Connotations of discovery suggest an abrupt arrival of the child being viewed as pure

and that opinions of this kind were unique to the nineteenth century and thus were rapidly assimilated and accepted throughout society. **Developments surrounding the child** are evolutionary not revolutionary, **suggestions of child purity** were the climax of thought and theory sparked before the nineteenth century and thus not unique to it. [Ruth version 3]



Final (changes made by dad)

One of the earliest works on the history of changing attitudes towards childhood and children is *Centuries of Childhood*, the famous work by Aries, in which he puts forward the concept of childhood as something discovered after the Middle Ages. **This concept** has been criticised as it suggests connotations of an abrupt arrival of attitudes of purity with ideas having to be accepted from the offset and rapidly assimilated. Through contemporary evidence, such as artwork, literature, ideological works and legislation to name a few, **it can be seen that changing attitudes** were in fact developed gradually. **Revisionist historians** therefore advocate a more gradual change in opinion, ideas take time to be assimilated be discussed and accepted.



Analysis of these texts shows little disruption in the sequential ordering of the topic. The final topic can easily be absorbed from the context. This therefore cannot explain the difficulty.

Analysis of cohesive ties

Version 3

One of the earliest works on the history of childhood and children is Centuries of Childhood, the famous work by Aries, in which childhood was something discovered by the --- ages.

Earliest works links with Centuries of Childhood (lexical cohesion); which refers to One of the earliest works;

This idea, childhood being something which was discovered has been criticised in itself, but has also been criticised as it goes against the idea that attitudes are something which are developed over time and are something of a gradual process.

This idea refers to childhood being something which was discovered; this refers to previous sentence, and is also elaborated afterwards;

Connotations of discovery suggest an abrupt arrival of the child being viewed as pure and that opinions of this kind were unique to the nineteenth century and thus were rapidly assimilated and accepted throughout society.

Discovery refers to something discovered in first sentence, but the link feels partly to get lost ; this kind refers back to abrupt arrival of the child; thus is a form of conjunction linking to the idea of being unique to the nineteenth century.

Developments surrounding the child are evolutionary not revolutionary, suggestions of child purity were the climax of thought and theory sparked before the nineteenth century and thus not unique to it.

Repetition of the child; thus as above; child purity makes reference to the essay title.

Version 11

One of the earliest works on the history of changing attitudes towards childhood and children is Centuries of Childhood, the famous work by Aries, in which childhood was something discovered after the Middle Ages.

earliest works links to history of changing attitudes and book title Centuries of Childhood; the famous work links to book title; in which links to the famous work; something refers to childhood.

The idea of childhood being discovered has been criticised as it suggests connotations of an abrupt arrival of attitudes of purity whereby ideas would have had to have been accepted from the offset and rapidly assimilation.

The idea of childhood being discovered links to something discovered in previous sentence; it refers to the idea;

Through contemporary evidence, such as artwork, literature, ideological works and legislation to name a few, it can be seen that changing attitudes were gradual; attitudes towards children are something which are built upon and developed.

Such as shows relationship with previous phrase; *changing attitudes* is repeated from the first sentence; repetition of *attitudes*;

Revisionist historians therefore advocate a more gradual change in opinion, ideas take time to be assimilated, discussed and accepted.

Therefore shows cause and effect relationship with previous idea; comparative form of *more gradual* contrasts with *abrupt*;

Final

One of the earliest works on the history of changing attitudes towards childhood and children is Centuries of Childhood, the famous work by Aries, in which he puts forward the concept of childhood as something discovered after the Middle Ages.

Earliest works links to *history of changing attitudes* and then the book title *Centuries of Childhood*, followed up further by *the famous work*; *in which* links to the book again; *he* refers to *Aries*; repetition of *childhood*; *something discovered* links to *childhood*

This concept has been criticised as it suggests connotations of an abrupt arrival of attitudes of purity with ideas having to be accepted from the offset and rapidly assimilated.

This concept refers back to previous sentence; *it* refers again to *this concept*;

Through contemporary evidence, such as artwork, literature, ideological works and legislation to name a few, it can be seen that changing attitudes were in fact developed gradually. Revisionist historians therefore advocate a more gradual change in opinion, ideas take time to be assimilated be discussed and accepted.

Such as defines the relationship with the previous phrase *through contemporary evidence*; repetition of *changing attitudes*; *in fact* emphasises contrast; *therefore* shows cause and effect relationship; comparative use of *more gradual* contrasts with *abrupt*;

Some cohesive ties are present in all, but not strong in version 3. They are strengthened in version in 11, but strengthened still further in the final version after dad's input, particularly in the first sentence.

Jenny: final and only version

Analysis of given and new information

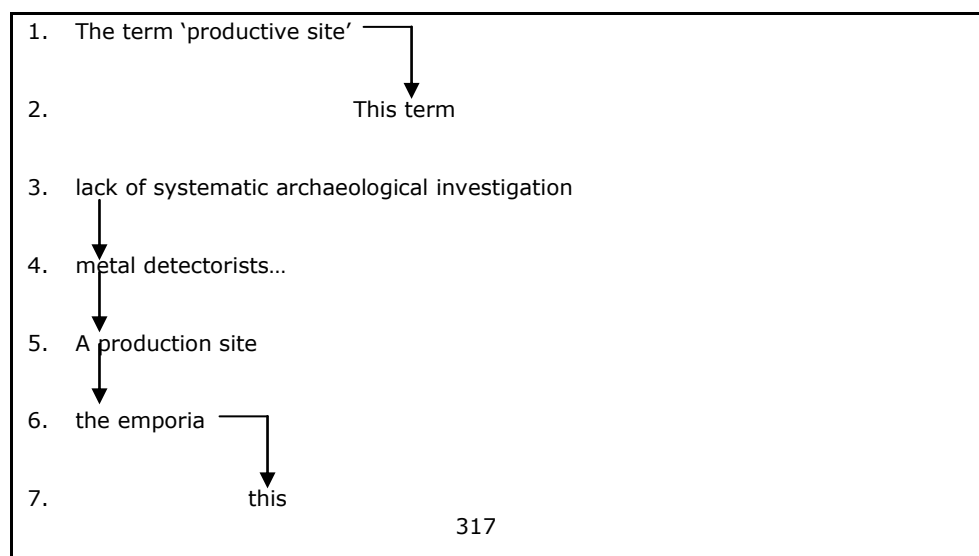
It has been suggested that the term 'productive' site is possibly not the best term to describe the sites, originally the term was used during the 1980s however the lack of systematic archaeological investigation and also with the metal detectorists finding the material before the archaeologists did also meant that possibly a full picture of the site could not be achieved (Ulmschneider and Pestell 2002:2). A production site is after all an area where items were being produced and not all sites that yield coins yield evidence for production. If this is the correct definition then it was only during the second half of the eighth century that the emporia actually began to resemble a production sites by becoming a centre for intensive craft production, this is something that Hodge's has discussed (Hodge's 1989:84-84). Moreland on the other hand has argued that rather than there be a

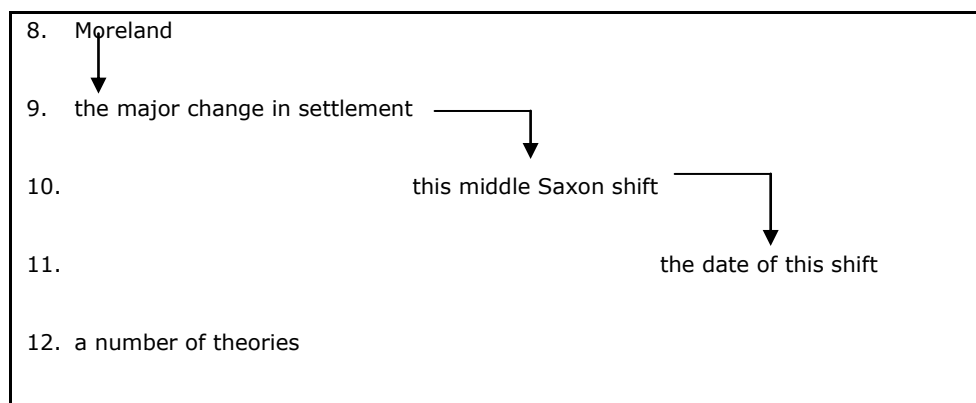
change from a gift giving to commodities it is entirely possible that both could have functioned within the same social space (Moreland 2000:75). It has been suggested that **the major change in settlement** happened before c.700, furthermore it has been suggested that **this middle Saxon shuffle** was just one of a number of elements that witnessed the emergence of new territorial and land-holding arrangements, it just so happens that **the date of this shift** coincided with the emergence of the emporia. However **a number of theories** have been put forward for the settlement shift including that the settlement's had to be moved because of soil erosion, population growth, population decline and technological advances (Moreland 2000:82-82).

It can be said that the disruption of given and new information to some extent disrupts coherence.

Jenny: Analysis of topical sentence structure

It has been suggested that **the term 'productive' site** is possibly not the best term to describe the sites, originally **the term** was used during the 1980s however **the lack of systematic archaeological investigation** and also **with the metal detectorists finding the material before the archaeologists** did also meant that possibly a full picture of the site could not be achieved (Ulmschneider and Pestell 2002:2). **A production site** is after all an area where items were being produced and not all sites that yield coins yield evidence for production. If this is the correct definition then it was only during the second half of the eighth century that **the emporia** actually began to resemble a production sites by becoming a centre for intensive craft production, **this** is something that Hodge's has discussed (Hodge's 1989:84-84). **Moreland** on the other hand has argued that rather than there be a change from a gift giving to commodities it is entirely possible that both could have functioned within the same social space (Moreland 2000:75). It has been suggested that **the major change** in settlement happened before c.700, furthermore it has been suggested that **this middle Saxon shuffle** was just one of a number of elements that witnessed the emergence of new territorial and land-holding arrangements, it just so happens that **the date of this shift** coincided with the emergence of the emporia. However **a number of theories** have been put forward for the settlement shift including that the settlement's had to be moved because of soil erosion, population growth, population decline and technological advances (Moreland 2000:82-82).





The analysis suggests that Jenny introduces topics in parallel and this makes it hard work for the reader to achieve a sense of connection between the points raised.

Analysis of cohesive ties

It has been suggested that the term 'productive' site is possibly not the best term to describe the sites,

Repetition of term;

originally the term was used during the 1980s however the lack of systematic archaeological investigation and also with the metal detectorists finding the material before the archaeologists did also meant that possibly a full picture of the site could not be achieved (Ulmschneider and Pestell 2002:2).

Repetition of term; also signals two factors, but repeated later so not very helpful; repetition of the site.

A production site is after all an area where items were being produced and not all sites that yield coins yield evidence for production.

Production, but is this the same as productive? Coins to be inferred from the material found by metal detectorists, but not easy to link; repetition of yield and production.

If this is the correct definition then it was only during the second half of the eighth century that the emporia actually began to resemble a production sites by becoming a centre for intensive craft production, this is something that Hodge's has discussed (Hodge's 1989:84-84).

This refers to previous sentence statement about a production site, but not very clear; introduction of emporia - an archaeologist may make more links here than I can but this seemed difficult; repetition of production site; a centre links to production site; this refers to becoming a centre for intensive craft production.

Moreland on the other hand has argued that rather than there be a change from a gift giving to commodities it is entirely possible that both could have functioned within the same social space (Moreland 2000:75).

On the other hand contrasts with Hodges' view; *both* refers to gift giving and commodities, but these are introduced with no context;

It has been suggested that the major change in settlement happened before c.700, furthermore it has been suggested that this middle Saxon shuffle was just one of a number of elements that witnessed the emergence of new territorial and land-holding arrangements,

The major change in settlement is used as though we know about it, but we are not sure what it refers to; repetition of *it has been suggested* but does not work; *middle Saxon shuffle* is presumably the same as *the major change in settlement*. Again this may be more obvious to a specialist. *One of a number of elements* includes *mid Saxon shuffle*

it just so happens that the date of this shift coincided with the emergence of the emporia. However a number of theories have been put forward for the settlement shift including that the settlement's had to be moved because of soil erosion, population growth, population decline and technological advances (Moreland 2000:82-82).

This shift refers back to previous *major change in settlement* and *mid Saxon shuffle*, so a third term is used to refer presumably to the same phenomenon; *settlement shift* refers back to *shift*; repetition of *settlement*;

Problems with cohesive ties are evident. Different terms are sometimes used for the same phenomenon or are introduced without context. It raises issues of audience, it may be less confusing for a subject specialist.